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## **DIPLOMA THESIS**

Reflexivní schopnosti praktikantů pedagogické fakulty oboru  
angličtina během oborové pedagogické praxe: Případová studie

Reflective skills of trainee teachers of English language  
during their teaching practice: Case study

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**Authorship Declaration**

I Martina Taušková hereby declare that I have elaborated the presented thesis by myself, only with the use of literature and other sources stated in the bibliography.

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Firstly, I would like to thank my supervisor, Mgr. Karel Žďárek, for providing his time, great help and useful and inspiring advice.

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### **Abstract**

This thesis examines the reflection skills of student English teachers at the Faculty of Education at Charles University in Prague during their teaching practice. The theoretical part introduces the reflective teaching model and looks into the phenomena of the teacher as reflective practitioner. The empirical part deals with the trainee teacher's reflection and methods, topics, depth and frequency. A significant part of the research also examines the influence of university employees (teacher mentors, supervisors, methodologists) as incentive supporters of the students' professional development regarding reflection.

**Key words:** reflection, reflective cycle, reflective practitioner, trainee teacher, teaching practice, teacher mentor, supervisor, teacher education

### **Anotace**

Tato diplomová práce se zabývá schopnostmi studentů pedagogické fakulty univerzity Karlovy v Praze oboru angličtina reflektovat během oborové pedagogické praxe. Teoretická část pojednává o reflektivním modelu vzdělávání učitelů a vysvětluje pojem učitele jako reflektivního praktika. Empirická část se zabývá reflexí praktikantů, jejich metodami, tématy, hloubkou a frekvencí. Značná část výzkumu také zkoumá vliv zaměstnanců univerzity (fakultních učitelů, hospitujících učitelů, metodiků) pro podporu reflexe a tím i profesního růstu praktikantů.

**Klíčová slova:** reflexe, proces reflexe, reflektivní praktik, praktikant, oborová pedagogická praxe, fakultní učitel, hospitující, vzdělávání učitelů

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## **1 Introduction**

The aim of the theoretical part is to introduce the concept of reflection and emphasize the importance of promoting reflection in teacher-training programs. High expectations are put on teachers whose work influences the lives of other people. Teaching is, therefore a very demanding occupation requiring university education. To be a teacher is a very complex profession including factors like proficiency in the field and methodology, caring about ethical principles, knowledge of psychology and sociology and many other factors. Teachers should create opportunities for learning, while having in mind many different aspects like a balanced development of all pupils' competencies, caring about needs of individual pupils, creating positive environment, etc. Additionally, teaching is subject to unexpected changes and therefore it demands a certain ability to make immediate choices and to improvise. Naturally, teacher training cannot prepare students for every situation that might occur in practice. Therefore, it is very important to equip future teachers with the ability to reflect on what, why and how they do what they do.

## **2 Theoretical Part**

### **2.1 Reflection**

Reflection is undoubtedly considered to be the most crucial skill in teacher's profession and it has become an important concept in teacher-training programs in last few decades. The importance of reflection is generally acknowledged, yet its definition is vague to a considerable extent and the concept might seem to be too abstract.

Different authors delineate the notion differently. For example, Korthagen defines reflection as: "... the mental process of trying to structure or restructure an experience, a problem, or existing knowledge or insights by making it an explicit subject of thinking" (Korthagen 71)

Dewey, the father of concept of reflective thinking, understands reflection as chain of linked ideas while each idea is a consequence of the previous one and this chain aims at a conclusion. (Dewey)

In common practice, reflection might be understood as just deeper thinking concerning, for example, the political situation or an argument with one's partner. In the sense of professional development, reflection means something different and can be characterized by the following attributes. Reflection is deliberate, purposeful, and structured, linking theory and practice, and what it has to do with teaching and it is about change and development. (The reflective teacher 8).

As mentioned above, reflection is a skill, and like any other skill, it must be learnt. Student teachers might have some initial experience with reflecting from their first micro-teaching during methodology lessons, however the most crucial experience for development of reflective skills is teaching practice. (Dytrtová in Wildová 60) puts special emphasis on the trainee's reflection during their teaching practice as an absolutely indispensable tool to become professionally qualified. Therefore, it is obvious that teaching practice is a highly important part of teacher-training programs. However, reflection is a very complex skill and student teachers need full support from the university supervisors to guide them through the process.

## **2.2 Models of learning teaching**

There are three leading models of learning teaching. The oldest one is the craft model, which was later challenged by the applied science model and the most modern one model is the reflective model. (Wallace 6)

The craft model is based on the student's observation and imitation of the expert teacher. The teaching expertise has been transferred from the master to the student for generations. However, society has developed and this development must naturally also apply to learning the teaching process. There are new scientific findings and the conditions in society are constantly changing, so the conservative craft model has become insufficient.



In contrast, the model of applied science reflects such changes. It is a top-down model based on the application of the latest scientific findings put into practice. (Hayes 2009) According to this model, all problems in practice can be solved thanks to empirical science. However, the deficiency of this model lies in the separation of practitioners and researchers (Wallace 9). The practitioners cannot solve problems themselves without a scientific base, so they need to rely on the researchers, and they, again, do not have direct practical experience. There are, of course, practitioners who are scientists as well, but this case is rather rare. Additionally, there are problems for which the scientific approach has not been able to come up with the answers.

The reflection model brings a compromise between the two above-mentioned models, combining practice with theory. Wallace (14) describes two kinds of knowledge: received and experiential. Received, science based, knowledge includes all intellectual content regarding the subject field, while the experiential knowledge is gained through practice. The fundamental difference between experiential knowledge and the craft model, according to the reflection model, lies in the reflection process. While the craft model is based on imitation, the reflection model is based on reflection on the experience. Wallace (12) demonstrates the significance of learning from practice in the example of today's praised communicative approach, which does not have a very strong scientific base but is rather based on tradition and conventions. A main drawback of the reflection model is easily noticeable, since trainees do not have enough experience in the beginning, it might be difficult for them to make connections between the practice and theory. Grenfell (1998, 14-15)

### **2.3 The Reflective model**

Today's approach to teaching, rather than focusing on methods and top down approach, puts emphasis on the teaching itself, the bottom-up approach (Richards a Lockhart, C. ix). This approach proceeds from what teachers do in practice and why they do it, examining individual teaching processes. The crucial point of this reflective model is the concept of the teacher as reflective

practitioner. This concept became popular in teacher education thanks to the work of Donald Schön (Reflective Practitioner 1983).

Characteristics of reflective teachers according to Korthagen and Wubbels: (139-142)

- Reflective teachers are capable of consciously structuring situations and problems, and consider it important to do so.
- Reflective teachers use standard questions when structuring experiences.
- Reflective teachers can easily answer the question of what they want to learn
- Reflective teachers can adequately describe and analyse their own functioning in the interpersonal relationships with others.

A reflective teacher can be characterized by skills as (Urbanovská in Vašutová 176):

- to describe and evaluate their pedagogical thinking, attitudes, actions, emotions, etc.
- to ask questions and to find answers to them,
- to compare the current “self” and the desired, ideal "self"
- to draw conclusions for improvement.

The teacher as a reflective practitioner should be able to critically examine their teaching experience. It does not mean that teachers with longer teaching practice are better reflective practitioners because they have more experience. The experience itself is insufficient for professional development and needs to be examined systematically. (Richards a Lockhart, C. 4) As mentioned-above, it is essential that the experience is reflected deliberately and systematically.

Korthagen has developed a model that facilitates trainees in their reflection. He divided the reflective process into individual steps and called it the ALACT model according to the initial letters of its five stages (Korthagen 58).

These steps are **Action**, **Looking back on the action**, **Awareness of essential aspects**, **Creating of alternative methods of action** and **Trial**. (see Figure 1)

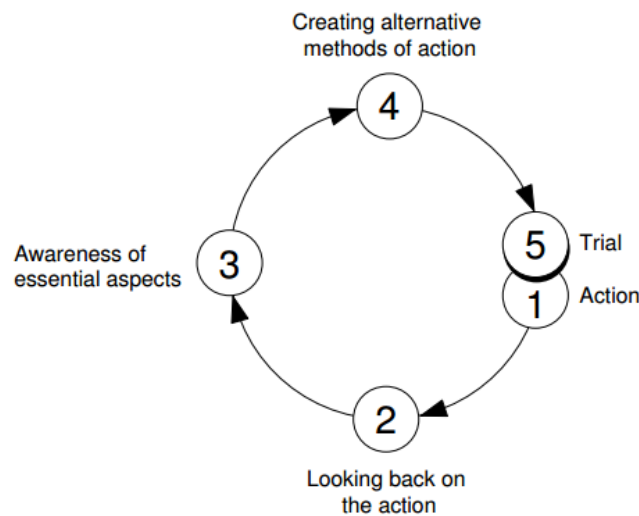


Figure 1: ALACT model

The **action** represents a certain happening in the classroom, immediate reaction and decision to act in a certain way. After the action the (trainee) teacher starts **Looking back on the action**, which usually takes place after the class in calmer atmosphere. Korthagen and Vasalos formulated 9 basic areas that are relevant to ask in this phase (Korthagen a Vasalos, A. 50):

0: What was the context?

1: What did you want?

2: What did you do?

3: What were you thinking?

4: How did you feel?

5: What did pupils want?

6: What did pupils do?

7: What were the pupils thinking?

8: What did the pupils feel?

According to Dixie's experience, the trainees, if not pressured, usually stop at this point describing the scenario of what happened and do not finish the whole reflective cycle. (Dixie 144) This kind of reflection is rather descriptive and shallow.

In the following step of the reflective cycle the student teacher should try to become **aware of the most essential aspects** of the action. In this stage some

theory is necessary and can be provided by the teacher mentor. After realizing the most essential aspects, **alternative methods of action** should be discussed. The trainee should try to find answers to questions like: What could have been done in a different way, what would have been more appropriate, what would have worked better in that situation? Creating alternative methods is a very important step because the teacher creates greater repertoire of ready-made strategies and remembers them easily in situations where immediate reaction is needed, and there is no time for careful consideration of the reaction.

The last step of the process is the **Trial**, where the results of the reflective process can be applied. At this moment the last stage actually becomes the first stage again and the whole process starts again. Korthagen does not describe this model as a circle but rather as a spiral. (58) Each cycle of reflection brings new knowledge, develops self-knowledge and helps to develop schemes for a repertoire of actions in the classroom.

The goal of the reflective cycle is to reach professional competence, which is demonstrated by Wallace's interpretation of the reflective model. It describes the trainee teacher entering the practice with previously gained knowledge: received knowledge and previous experiential knowledge. The practice and the subsequent reflection create a reflective cycle and the outcome of this cycle is professional competence. (Wallace 15) Of course that it is rather subjective to say when the professional competence is reached, since professional development should continue throughout the whole teaching career. This fact is also expressed by the Korthagen's concept of the spiral and Wallace demonstrates this graphically in the form of an arrow leading further from the professional competence. (see Figure 2)

More experienced teachers can naturally go through the reflective process much easier than beginning teachers. In fact, it can be very difficult for the student teachers to carry it out. That is why they need the care of their teacher mentors as well as supervisors from the university. According to Korthagen the most important role of the teacher mentor is to teach the student how to go through the reflection process independently. He thinks that the teacher mentor should not go through the process of the reflection alone instead of the trainee. (Korthagen 117) The teacher mentor should support the student to make the reflection cycle by himself/herself so that they learn how to carry it out themselves.

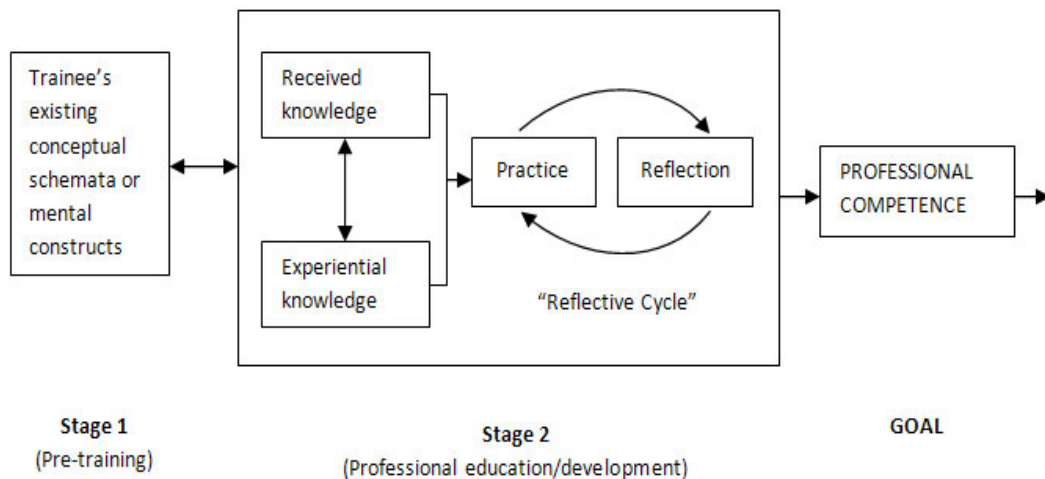


Figure 2: Wallace's reflective model

As Wallace points out, the experiential knowledge is not shared but private, (53) which is a very important fact to acknowledge. For example, a technique that works with one teacher does not work with another one or it can work with a group of students and does not work with another one. For that reason, the teacher mentor should try not to transfer his/her own strategies to the student teacher but rather to guide them through the reflection process and support them to come up with their own output out of the process.

Some teacher mentors can find this process difficult, while it is much easier to offer their own working and well-tested methods to the students. Also the student teachers themselves might be expecting the teacher mentor to give them ready-made solutions, which represent an easy way of solving a certain problem. On the other hand this is only a short-term solution and does not help the student to solve other problems. Korthagen appeals to the mentors to resist the temptation to offer ready-made solutions and rather help the student to go through the reflection process. (Korthagen 117)

He further recommends focusing on asking helpful questions like: "What happened in the class?" "How did you feel?" "What did you want to achieve by that action?" "What was the reason of the problem?" "Do you face the same problem in all classes?" etc. (Korthagen 117)

## 2.4 Evidence of importance of reflection

This section aims to stress the importance of reflection in teacher's profession. Korthagen introduces specific personal attributes that appear to correlate with reflective skills of teachers (143-147):

- Better relationships with pupils than other teachers
- High degree of job satisfaction.
- They consider it important for their students to learn by investigating and structuring things themselves.
- Reflective student teachers have, earlier in their lives, been encouraged to structure their experiences, problems, and so on.
- strong feelings of personal security and self-efficacy as teachers.
- Student teachers who have a high degree of self-efficacy focus in their reflections about their teaching on the students. When they have a low sense of self-esteem they focus on the self.
- They talk or write relatively easily about their experiences.

Hupková demonstrates the differences between teachers who are using reflection and those who are not. (in Dytrtová 58)

<b>reflective teacher</b>	<b>non-reflective teacher</b>
focuses on pupils	focuses on himself/herself or the lesson plan
plans the educational process	no or short perspectives
role of facilitator	relies on own experience
need of feedback	prefers trial-and-error learning and teaching
uses strategic thinking	transfers knowledge
comes to conclusion after detailed observation of self, pupils and situation	comes to conclusion without examining the causes, succumbs to prejudice, routine work

need of further education	no need of further education
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The difference between reflective and non-reflective teacher is also evident from a research conducted by Berliner, Cushing, Sabers and Carter, which showed that expert teachers are better in interpretation of what is going on in the classroom. Novice teachers focus rather on individual visual clues while expert teachers focus rather on listening to pupils. This can be explained by the fact that the expert teachers have developed knowledge of classroom schemas and routines. So what might seem as many disjointed activities to a novice teacher, the expert teacher can interpret on basis of his/her knowledge of schemes. (Weiner et. al 161)

Stronge cites numerous researches on reflective practice of teachers and sums up few interesting findings: pupils with high achievement rates have usually a teacher who continually uses reflection because reflective teachers usually put higher expectations on their pupils. (Stronge 31) Richards and Lockhart state that teachers using reflection can discover whether there is a gap between what they teach and what their pupils learn. (Richards and Lockhart 4)

Korthagen and Wubbels give two arguments to support the role of reflection in teacher education: **the technical competence** and the **growth competence**. (60) He believes that today's world is changing very fast that the university can hardly prepare students for everything they will need in their teaching practice. Therefore, it is important to prepare them for life-long learning, i.e. develop their growth competence. Korthagen acknowledges that the technical competence is also very important because it serves among others as base for further reflection.

## 2.5 Types of reflection (reflection-in-action, reflection-on-action)

Donald Schön in his revolutionary work *The Reflective Practitioner* (1983) distinguishes two types of reflection: the reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action. The reflection-in-action takes place directly in the classroom as a reaction to a certain situation. According to Dixie (142-143) the expert teachers perceive this reflection as something natural and intuitive but the trainees can find this reflection very difficult because they do not have enough teaching experience, yet. The reflection-on-action is not intuitive any more but based on conscious articulation of

what happened in the class. Schön finds the reflection-on-action to be the key process in learning how to teach.

According to Nezvalová there are five types of reflection that are important for trainee teacher (Dytrtová 58):

- **technical reflection:** focusing on teaching methods,
- **reflection-in-action and on-the-action:** immediate decision making and looking back on the decision later
- **advisory reflection** is based on confrontation between advice from others, information from research and own experience
- **personal reflection:** focuses on personal and professional development
- **critical reflection:** leading to fulfilling of educational goals

## 2.6 Levels of reflection (onion model by Korthagen)

Korthagen described levels of reflection with his onion model (Korthagen a Vasalos, A. 50) In this model there are levels, contents in which the reflection is taking place. The inner levels determine the outer levels. These levels are: mission, professional identity, beliefs, competencies, behaviour and environment.

Reflection usually takes place only within the outer levels: The level of **environment** which generally describes everything that happens outside the teacher. The level of **behaviour** describes how the teacher behaves whether the behaviour is effective or ineffective. The level of **competencies** deals with competences of the teacher, e.g. to respond in a constructive manner. The level of **beliefs** deals with system of teacher's beliefs, e.g. the pupils are lazy, willing to cause trouble, the pupils are testing me. A study on teacher's thinking deals with questions like (Richards and Lockhart 30):

- What do teachers believe about teaching and learning?
- How is their knowledge organized?
- What are the sources of teachers' beliefs?
- How do teachers' beliefs influence their teaching?

In reflection, it is common to focus only on the outer levels as the environment, behaviour, competencies and beliefs.

However, there are situations in which the reflection process is repeatedly not successful. Even though the reflection cycle is completed and repeated, the causes



of problems still continue to be unidentified. In such a case, it is probable that the problem lies in a deeper structure and the reflection process should focus on the deepest levels.

The inner levels are identity and mission. The **identity** level contains the notion of self: Self-knowledge and experience with self. The teacher is building his or her professional identity in this level. As mentioned above the identity level will influence all outer levels, too. Korthagen gives an example of a trainee teacher who is afraid of dealing with discipline so that he/she develops the identity of a policeman. Obviously this will be reflected in his/her competences, beliefs, behaviour and the learning environment in the class.

There is one more level that is underlying the level of identity and it is the level of **mission**. It is the deepest level and again it influences all outer levels.

This level contains pedagogical ideals, reasons why the teacher decided to teach, the meaning of one's life, personal determination to do something helpful and the concept of the teacher's calling. In contrast to identity level, which focuses on the notion of self, the level of mission is interpersonal. This means how the person relates himself/herself to other people, how he/she sees his/her role in society. Teachers with pedagogical ideals focus much more on interests and needs of pupils.

### **2.6.1 Core reflection – ideal situation, limiting factors**

The reflection of the two deepest levels is called **core reflection**. The following indicators can show that that core reflection is needed

- The outcome of the reflection circle is not satisfactory.
- Specific problem has not disappeared even after repeated reflection and the trainee is still not successful in applying alternative solutions.
- There are various problems and it seems there is some deeper underlying issue.
- The teacher feels the need to go deeper.

In the process of core reflection there are two essential questions to be asked: What does the **ideal situation** look like and what are the **limiting factors**? What would be the ideal situation the teacher wants to achieve? What is preventing him/her from this goal? Korthagen and Vasalos differentiate the following limiting factors (Korthagen and Vasalos 55):

- **Limiting behaviour** (avoiding confrontations)

- **Limiting feelings** ('I feel powerless')
- **Limiting images** ('the class is a mess')
- **Limiting beliefs** ('this is something I have no influence over')

Korthagen and Vasalos give an example of a trainee teacher who wants to be relaxed and self-confident during her lessons (her core quality) but she believes she is not yet an experienced teacher and that only experienced teachers have the right to be relaxed and self-confident. (Korthagen and Vasalos 55)

Formulating the ideal situation and the limiting factor creates inner tension of discrepancy and gives impulse to the trainee to eliminate the limiting factors and activate the core qualities.

## **2.7 Methods of reflection**

There are naturally many different ways that trainees can use in their reflecting but the following chapter offers only some examples: journals, observation and action research. This chapter further explores the role of supervision.

### **2.7.1 Journals**

Keeping teacher's or trainee journal serves two main purposes: to record the ideas about the event for later and as a discovery process. (Richards and Lockhart 7) Korthagen suggests that the journal entries should be concerning rather concrete events than general evaluations because of the higher reflective potential (Korthagen 203). As an example of how to keep a reflective journal Dixie suggests using the following reflective formula for the entries: (Dixie 146)

1. Identify and describe scenario
2. What are the perceived consequences of these behaviours?
3. What are the implications and targets for professional practice?
4. What evidence can you provide to show how you have used this experience to develop your practice and to inform your behaviour in professional scenarios?

An extract from a trainee's reflective journal demonstrates these individual steps: (Dixie 147)

1. The trainee forgot to preface the starter activity (throwing a ball) with his/her expectations and safety and health rules

2. When subsequently writing aims of the lesson on board, pupils still continued throwing the ball as hard as they could at walls and on other classmates
3. He/she would do make sure to give pupils a “setting down” activity before writing the objectives on the board
4. The trainee has tried this activity again but provided pupils with the rationale for the activity and established rules and expectations for the session. The starter activity was highly successful this time.

### **2.7.2 Observation**

Observation is another way how to gather useful information about one's teaching. However, it should be perceived as way of gathering information about teaching rather than as an evaluation, otherwise the observed persons might be reluctant to take part in the observation or perceive it as negative experience (Richards and Lockhart 12) Beside the observation of expert teachers, peer observation is another useful source of information since its different nature is more probably based on fellow feeling of the trainees and may discover different aspects than the observation of an expert teacher.

One of the problems faced by observes is what should be focus of the observation since the classroom is so rich and different observers perceive the same situation differently. (Wragg 5) The observation might be recorded by notes, video or audio recorded and transcribed. Each of these methods has advantages and disadvantages.

### **2.7.3 Action research**

Another method supporting reflection is action research which is a teacher (trainee)-initiated classroom investigation and typically brings about some change. (Richards and Lockhart 12) In contrast to empirical research that focuses on other people, the action research focuses on self. (McNiff)

McNiff defines basic steps of an action research (McNiff):

- identify an area of practice to be investigated;
- imagine a solution;
- implement the solution;
- evaluate the solution;

- change practice in light of the evaluation

#### 2.7.4 Supervision

In the process of learning reflection, it is very important for trainees to have appropriate university supervision. Korthagen sees the aim of supervision to teach trainees how to go through the reflective process alone. (Korthagen 115)

Wallace describes two typical supervisors' approaches: prescriptive and collaborative. The following table introduces typical indicators of each approach: (Wallace 110)

<b>classic prescriptive approach</b>	<b>classic collaborative approach</b>
supervisor as authority figure	supervisor as colleague
supervisor as source of expertise	supervisor and trainee as co-sharers of expertise
supervisor judges	supervisor understands
supervisor applies a "blueprint" on lesson ought to be taught	supervisor has no blueprint: accepts lesson in terms of what trainee is attempting to do
supervisor talks, trainee listens	supervisor considers listening as important as talking
supervisor attempts to preserve authority and mystique	supervisor attempts to help trainee develop autonomy, through practice in reflection and self-evaluation

The discussion with supervisor should have some structure, for example the following four phases: (Dytrtová 70)

1. Descriptive phase (what the trainee did)
2. Explanatory phase (to enlighten the trainee's behaviour)
3. Confrontation phase (enables to start thinking about wider circumstances and context of trainee's behaviour)
4. Non-constructive phase: leads to change or improvement of behaviour

In order to lead a reflective dialogue, specific requirements should be met. Wallace presents Schön's constants: (118)

1. **Media** – spoken word, languages – the technical language should be appropriate for teaching English, repertoires – participants are concerned with certain skills, techniques, strategies,
2. **Overarching theories** through which the supervisor and trainee teacher make sense of phenomena, shared understanding what language teaching is about, common problem arises when for example the student believes he/she has taught “communicative” lesson while the supervisor does not find it communicative at all,
3. **Value system** – values shared by both participants – what is important, what is not, different people consider different aspects to be worth commenting, supervisor should ensure that the trainee establishes mature value system
4. **Role frames** – how do the participants of the dialogue see their role? Is supervisor’s role to correct student according to predetermined principles? Is the trainee an empty vessel waiting to be filled with expertise? These roles and rules ought to be made clear and explicit.

## 2.8 Teachers’ standards

The quality of teachers has become a focus of education policy of most European countries since 1990’s and simultaneously has become focus of empirical research to describe qualities of a good teacher (Tomková, Spilková et al. 6) Models aiming to define such qualities serve not only to professionals for professional development but they are important also in teacher education. These standards are surely a helpful overview of key areas where trainees should look for improvement; therefore a short presentation of teachers’ standards is included in this thesis.

These models usually include content knowledge, pedagogical skills, attitudes, values and personal qualities. (Tomková, Spilková et al. 6) An important part of these models are also reflective skills and competence for further professional development and life-long learning.

### 2.8.1 Teachers’ standards in the Czech Republic

An example of Teachers’ standards used in the Czech Republic is the international standard of teacher in RWCT program (Reading and Writing for Critical Thinking) (<http://www.msmt.cz/standarducitele>). Discussions about

creation of official Czech teachers standards have been carried on since publishing of the national program for development of education, so-called White book, in 2001. (Tomková, Spilková et al. 8). The ministry of Education initiated the process of formulating professional standards in 2008 and its content was supposed to be based on public discussion. (Košťálová, Pišová et al.) The outcome of these discussions was formulated by a group of specialists and further served as basis for formulating of **The Framework of Teachers' Professional Qualities**. This framework is part of the program of the Ministry of education "Cesta ke kvalitě" (translation: Towards quality) serving schools as an instrument for self-evaluation.

The framework includes expectations as teachers' conduct according ethical principles and subject knowledge. Further, the following key areas are defined:

- lesson planning
- learning environment
- learning processes
- assessment of pupils work
- reflection
- development of school and cooperation with colleagues
- cooperation with parents and wider public
- Professional development

Each of these areas also include indicator of quality (for more, see The Framework)

### **2.8.2 Teachers' Standards in the United Kingdom**

In the United Kingdom the standards serve also as an instrument for awarding teachers with TQS (teacher qualified status). The teachers' standards (before 2011: Professional standards for Qualified Teacher status) are divided into two parts: **teaching** and **personal and professional conduct**.

([https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/283198/Teachers\\_\\_Standards.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/283198/Teachers__Standards.pdf))

#### **Part One: Teaching**

A teacher must:

1. Set high expectations which inspire, motivate and challenge pupils
2. Promote good progress and outcomes by pupils

3. Demonstrate good subject and curriculum knowledge
4. Plan and teach well structured lessons
5. Adapt teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all pupils
6. Make accurate and productive use of assessment
7. Manage behaviour effectively to ensure a good and safe learning environment
8. Fulfil wider professional responsibilities

### **Part two: Personal and professional conduct**

A teacher is expected to demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct. The following statements define the behaviour and attitudes which set the required standard for conduct throughout a teacher's career.

- Teachers uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by:
- Treating pupils with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher's professional position
- Having regard for the need to safeguard pupils' well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions
- Showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others
- Not undermining fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- Ensuring that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law.
- Teachers must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they teach, and maintain high standards in their own attendance and punctuality.
- Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

## **2.9 Specific phenomena of teachers' profession**

To be a teacher is a responsible job because teachers accept the responsibility towards the pupils, their parents and to the whole society. Teachers are expected to be well-educated in their field and in methodology, to be good models for pupils, to be enthusiastic, encourage pupils, fair, understanding, have sense of humour, etc. Teachers are exposed to a high level of pressure, they have to make many immediate decisions and reflect on them. These processes are rather subjective, so the teachers can never be sure if they made the right decision. Also the emotional pressure is high, which requires higher level of self-control. The following section deals with the most prominent phenomena of teacher's profession that might be relevant to acknowledge for student teachers during their teaching practice.

### **2.9.1 Stress**

The profession of teaching is considered to be a highly stressful one. Anderson mentions several works of research on the stress level of teachers and these report that around 40 % of teachers feel that they are experiencing high levels of stress. (Anderson 5) Anderson points out an interesting fact from a study by Baker (2004) that the stress level of teachers is double than of other stressful jobs. The following two most stressful jobs according to that study are nurses and managers, which Anderson considers to be common roles of teachers as well. Not only do teachers play many different roles, but there are also many competences and skills they have to master. During a lesson, a teacher has to constantly evaluate the current situation, make many decisions, manage multi-tasking and so on.

In addition to that, there are many non-standard situations the teacher has to deal with and all of this causes stress. Stress makes teachers act emotionally rather than rationally. He or she might start screaming or get angry with the pupils. A teacher can also get very emotional about the success or failure of pupils, as well as about the lack of discipline in the classroom. When the teacher is stressed and acts emotionally, the communication between pupils and teacher is disturbed and it obstructs reaching educational goals. Hence, only a well-balanced teacher can create safe, energetic and happy learning environment for the pupils. (Anderson 7) Preventing and reducing a teacher's frustration and stress is also important for classroom discipline. (Boynton 7) For this reason, student teachers should take care



in analysing their feelings during their teaching practice and learn to deal with their emotions.

The most cited causes of stress for teachers are uncooperative children, feelings of inadequacy regarding teaching, aggressive children, concerns for children's learning and role conflict. (Lawrence 55) Other causes are, according to Míček and Zeman (1997), too many responsibilities, lack of time, too many students in the classroom, pupils with learning disabilities, hyperactive pupils, lack of assistants for pupils with special leaning needs, disinterest of pupils, disciplinary problems at school, lack of interest of some parents about their children, status of teachers, and influence of the consumer society.

Dixie sees possible sources of stress for trainee teachers in the following situations: worries to meet assignment deadlines, being anxious about meeting standards that the course supervisor expects, school that does not provide student teachers with enough support, and struggling to keep up with the workload. (Dixie 179)

### 2.9.2 Maintaining discipline

Maintaining discipline is one of the most feared aspects of teaching practice. It is obvious that good classroom management is essential for creating of an effective teaching and learning environment. On one hand discipline is important for the pupils so they do not disturb each other and can focus on learning. On the other hand lack of discipline is also very stressful for the teacher.

According to Boynton, the most crucial components of a discipline system are **positive teacher-student relationship** 40%, **monitoring skills** 25%, **clear parameters of acceptable behaviours** 25% and **consequences** 10% (Boynton 4) Boynton suggests building the classroom discipline system around the first three components trying to prevent the negative consequences. However, it is probably not always possible, so when dealing with the consequences, teachers must be careful to clearly define and articulate the consequences for the misbehaviour.

The most influential tool for maintaining discipline is **the positive teacher-student relationship**. Curwin introduces concept of the three Cs: connection, competence, control. (Curwin 42-44) According to this concept, pupils misbehave if their needs of **connection**, **competence** and **control** are unfulfilled. If teacher does not neglect such needs, most of the pupils' misbehaviour will be avoided. Pupils

need to have a sense of connection, to feel they are important for others. If this need is unfulfilled they seek attention and start to misbehave. Pupils also need to believe in their competence. If they do not believe in their success they might refuse to obey the teacher and give up on their assignments too early. Pupils should also feel that they are given some amount of control and responsibility, otherwise they might seek power struggles, and start to argue and be disrespectful.

The following strategies how to develop a positive relationship with the pupils are taken from Boynton (Boynton 6-20) and Curwin (Curwin 42-44) and classified according to the division of Curwin's focus on pupil's needs:

**Connection:** Teachers should call on pupils equitably - not selecting only a few pupils to answer all the time, show an interest in pupils' lives, sincerely listen to them, and empathize with them, develop positive classroom pride, display pupils' work products (projects, pictures) in the classroom. The teacher might stand at the door and welcome each pupil coming into the class.

**Competence:** Teachers should always show belief in pupils' success, never show doubts about their abilities, wait for pupils' answers rather than select another pupil, positively reinforce pupils verbally.

**Control:** Teachers should give pupils choices – they feel involved and learn to accept responsibly for their choices, when correcting pupils, encourage them to come up with alternative actions of their behaviour.

For a positive teacher-student relationship there is one very important fact to acknowledge and it is **respecting the pupil's dignity**. When correcting pupils, the teacher should always take care to allow pupils to keep their dignity. (Boynton 13) Only if the teacher respects the pupils and shows them care, can the correction process be effective rather than when teacher uses disgust, sarcasm and bitterness. Curwin also points out that attacking a pupil's dignity does not have a positive influence on the self-esteem of pupils and it is very likely to cause disciplinary problems. Most of the pupils who misbehave believe they cannot be successful. If the teacher attacks a pupil's dignity, the pupil will start to feel like a loser and start developing some strategy not to be hurt. Curwin formulates such strategies as: "To be recognized as a trouble maker is better than being seen as stupid" (Curwin 20)

To deal with misbehaviour and simultaneously to take care not to endanger their dignity might seem like a difficult task. Here are some strategies how to find such way. The teacher should not forget to articulate and accept the pupil's feelings

but show that the pupil's behaviour is unacceptable. The teacher does not have to hide their feelings and can articulate them as such: "I am disappointed with your behaviour". However, the teacher should try to stay calm and not forget to communicate expectations for the pupil's future improvement. (Boynton 14) Curwin suggests that using humour might help in tense situations but the teacher should always take care to not to make fun of the pupils. (Curwin 22)

A very interesting idea about how to deal with misbehaviour that the teacher cannot stop, is to legitimize it in a creative way. Curwin claims that when the misbehaviour is legitimized within boundaries of fun, of the forbidden action usually disappears. The example given, if pupils continue to use abusive language, the teacher might give them 5 minutes to define the meaning of the words in front of the whole class to ensure understanding of the word. (Curwin 23)

For maintaining discipline, it is also very important to prevent and reduce stress and frustration not only of the pupils, but also of the teacher. (Boynton 7) The previous section has demonstrated the importance of avoiding stress for the teachers. To prevent or reduce stress, the teacher can assign pupils individual work and relax a little bit during that time. In the case of the trainee teacher, he/she should not be worried about asking the teacher mentor to take the difficult pupil out of the classroom for some time.

### 2.9.3 Establishing Authority

Authority is another concept of high importance especially for teachers. Even expert teachers struggle to maintain their authority, let alone the trainee teachers. The question of authority is probably one of the biggest worries student teachers might have before entering the teacher practice.

Pace and Hemmings describe authority as a social construct negotiated between the teacher and pupils based on "teachers' legitimacy, pupils' consent and moral order consisting of shared purposes, values and norms" (Pace 1-3) The right of the teacher to establish authority is based on the pupils' belief in his/her legitimacy so that they voluntarily obey the teacher. This relationship is also based on shared purposes, values, goals, beliefs and norms. (Pace 3)

Another definition of authority is formulated by Kyriacou, who sees the main factors for maintaining authority to be the **status, teaching competence, exercising control over the classroom and exercising control over discipline** (Kyriacou 102)

**Status** is the most basic form of authority, it is based on being an adult and being a teacher. Pace and Hemmings calls this factor **traditional authority** (Pace 3). Status allows the teacher to do thing that pupils cannot; for example: moving around the class, initiating and terminating conversation, giving marks and punishments. Student teachers might partly have problem with this authority because of their young age.

**Teaching competence** contributes to the authority as well. The teacher should be an expert in the subject, should be enthusiastic about it and should be able to set up effective learning experiences. Pace and Hemmings call this factor, **professional authority**. (Pace 3) The teacher should have **control over the classroom activities**. The running of the activities should be effective, preventing any chaos. The teacher should also be in control of classroom interaction. However, trainees should be prepared, that as Kyriacou says:“..., almost every activity has potential for pupils to challenge the teacher’s authority..”. (Kyriacou 106)

The last factor for maintaining authority is **control over the classroom discipline**. Even though power-actions are sometimes inevitable, the teacher should not rely on them too much. Discipline should be rather established by supporting pupil’s intrinsic motivation, curiosity and learning engagement.

#### **2.9.4 Importance of good rapport with pupils**

The importance of a positive teacher-student relationship has been already discussed in connection to discipline. However, this paragraph seeks to put additional focus on the importance of good rapport with pupils. When establishing authority it is essential not to neglect the positive relationship. The teacher should not strive to maintain authority at the cost of good rapport with pupils. Good rapport is very important for effective learning. Kyriacou sees the most important principles of establishing good rapport: to **show genuine care for each pupil’s progress, show respect for pupils as learners, show respect for pupils as individuals**. (Kyriacou 109) Teacher should for example check on pupil’s understanding and identifying their difficulties and offer them extra help. Teacher should show appreciation for pupils’ good work and in the case of failure, to express belief for future improvement. Teachers should be patient, supportive and friendly. On the other hand, teachers should be careful not to develop too friendly a relationship with their pupils because it also decreases the effectiveness of the learning processes.

The teacher should try to negotiate the best balance between exercising control and establishing good rapport.

## **2.10 Other possible areas for reflection during teaching practice**

Teaching practice is an experience that represents a big challenge for student teachers. It is their first opportunity to put their knowledge gained at university into practice and therefore they will probably have lot of worries and encounter many difficulties. This section is going to deal with studies on common difficulties and types of teacher mentors.

### **2.10.1 Difficulties of trainee teachers**

This part examines the most common difficulties of trainee teachers and beginning teachers based on empirical research. According to a study from the years 1990-1992 conducted by Šimoník in the Czech Republic, the most common problems included the following fields: **working with failing students, maintaining discipline, keeping attention of pupils, diagnostics of pupils personality, motivation of students, appropriate reaction on unexpected happening in the class, dealing with disciplinary issues, activating pupils, individual work with students, not only teaching but also educating in sense of developing pupils personalities.** (Šimoník 63) All these problems appeared with more than 50% of the beginning teachers.

This study also examines to what extent the beginning teachers were prepared for these situations during their studies. The beginning teachers stated that they were prepared well for the presentation of new subject matter, organization of individual work of pupils, developing pupils personalities, testing and assessment, time management, choice of appropriate materials, motivation of pupils, and adapting to pupils age. On the contrary, beginning teachers claimed not to be prepared in fields like: appropriate reaction to unexpected happenings in the class, organizing meetings with parents, paper work, working with failing students, dealing with disciplinary issues, maintaining discipline, cooperation with other teachers, diagnostics of pupils' personalities, appropriate setting of a task, communication with pupils (both verbal and non-verbal), and keeping the attention of pupils. (Šimoník 64)

The results of this study show that beginning teachers mostly had **problems in fields for which they were not prepared**: working with failing students, maintaining discipline, keeping attention of pupils, diagnostics of pupils' personalities, motivation of students, appropriate reaction to unexpected happenings in the class. On the other hand, the students had the least difficulty with presentation of new subject matter, where they found the preparation sufficient. There were also fields for which the teachers were prepared but faced problems anyway as in: developing pupils' personalities, diagnostics of pupil's personality and motivation of pupils.

In contrast to Šimoník's quantitative approach focused rather on technical aspect of the subject issue, researcher Trout Muffet based her research on qualitative approach focusing on trainees' feelings. She describes her experience as a supervisor with her student teachers. Caty, one of her students suffered a break down when she burst into tears in front of the whole class. (p. 101) Caty's emotional state had gone so far because she felt a lack of support from the school, as well as from the university. Caty described in her journal that she was very upset about the lack of feedback from anyone. She thinks that she had too high expectations of herself; she wanted to be a perfect teacher, and therefore, her teaching experience led only to frustration. She says that she needed someone to remind her that she is not a certified teacher, yet and that she is still learning. (p.102)

Derricks, another student of Muffet, had a different experience from teaching. His goal was to encourage students for discussions, but he was not successful. (p.40) Even though Derric was convinced that changing of the seating arrangement would help, he decided not to do it after taking into consideration his teacher mentor's feeling. Derric felt that he is only a guest in his teacher mentor's classroom and had no to right for such changes. (p.45.)

Lance, another student of Muffet, felt very frustrated and found himself on the edge of burnout. He found himself putting too much energy into his preparation in comparison with low engagement of his pupils. He found himself unable to be creative and inspirational. For him creating of a good lesson plan was useless since lot of pupils did not even attend his lessons or they showed very little interest. Lance expressed that he was overburdened by his emotions and this made him

neither care about his lesson plans nor about marks he would get for the teaching practice. (p.79)

### **2.10.2 Types of teacher mentors (study on teacher mentors in the Czech Republic)**

From the stories mentioned above it is obvious that the cooperation with the teacher mentor is an essential part of the teaching practice. The relationship with the teacher mentor can very strongly influence the student teacher's progress. It might be useful for trainee teachers to also reflect on the relationship with the teacher mentor. According to a study from Píšová and Duschinská which was conducted with teacher mentors cooperating with Charles University in Prague, there are 4 basic types of relationships between the teacher mentor and the student teacher: friendship alike, personal coaching, polite neighbourhood and professional competition (Píšová 115).

The teacher mentor in the **friendship alike** relationship is usually very empathetic. He or she tries to look through the eyes of the student and recognize their needs. The aim of the mentor is to establish a friendly relationship. Both the mentor and the student usually describe this relationship in a very positive way.

In contrast the **personal coaching** relationship is not based on personal liking or harmony between the mentor and the student but on professionally leading the student. The mentor is typically very energetic, uses praise and criticism. His or her aim is to teach the student as much as possible. The students usually highly appreciate the benefits from this relationship.

The next type is called **polite neighbourhood**. The mentor does not show any enthusiasm, typically does not even want to teach. Mentoring is limited only to the most necessary things like organization or critical situations. This relationship lacks systematic professional support. The mentor typically claims to be very busy and demonstrates the lack of time for the student.

The last type of mentoring relationship is called **professional competition**. It is close to the personal coaching but with elements of jealousy. The teacher mentor typically compares himself or herself with the student. According to the study these mentors mention the younger age and nicer appearance of the students, freshly gained knowledge from the university and strong motivation. However, the students

showed the ability to select from the mentor's behaviour and chose to learn only from the beneficial information.

It is obvious from the typology that not every teacher can be a good mentor. In order to learn as much as possible it is essential for the student teacher to choose a good one. It might be worth considering asking older students for recommendation.



### 3 Empirical Part

This thesis seeks to describe how teaching practice, the first real-life teaching experience of trainee teachers, contributes to development of their reflective skills. This paper conducts a survey of topics that trainees reflect upon, methods they use and the frequency of their reflections. This research also examines the support from the university and teacher mentors.

The main research question was formulated as:

**What is the contribution of experience from teaching practice for the development of reflective skills of trainee teachers?**

Then the main research question was divided into more specific research questions:

**What topics are the subjects of reflection?**

**To what depth, how often, using what methods do the students use in this reflection process?**

**How do students perceive support from their university supervisors and teacher mentors?**

#### 3.1 Research approach and methods

The qualitative research approach seems the most suitable approach for the research, because it will bring deeper insight into how trainee teachers learn to reflect and it will hopefully contribute to better understanding of this issue. Therefore, the case study was chosen as the design of this research. Based on works by Švaříček, Šed'ová (2007), Hendl (2008) and Gavora (2000), interview and observation seemed to be the most suitable methods for this research. The use of different methods and so-called triangulation of sources of data aim to ensure the validity of the research. The materials that arise from these methods are transcripts of interviews, observation reports, notes from lesson observations, notes from analyses after observation by university supervisors and analysis of portfolios. For an overview of methods and materials see the following table:

<b>method</b>	<b>material</b>
recorded interview	transcripts
lesson observation	observation reports

analysis observation	notes
non-structured interview	notes
analysis of material	trainees' portfolios

The research was conducted in our mother tongue, Czech, which was more convenient for all participants and more suitable for expressing their ideas, thoughts and feelings more precisely and in greater detail. In addition, all discussions of trainee teachers with the supervisors were conducted in Czech. So the research was conducted in Czech and then only its description and interpretation were translated into English and not all the data.

#### Research environment

The research was conducted at the department of English language and literature at Charles University in Prague. As I was a student there two years ago, I was familiar with the environment. In order to get familiar with possible changes since that time and to find out about the common practice, I talked to several students and university teachers at the beginning of my research. Facebook also provided a great deal of insight into the subject issue. Following the posts of members of the students from the English language department group was a very rich source of information.

There are two teaching practices. One of them takes place in the second semester at second grade of elementary school. The second one takes place in the third semester at secondary school. The practice is usually led by two methodologists. Each trainee teacher has a teacher mentor at the school, who supports him/her during the practice. Also, during their practice, one lesson will be observed. The supervisor coming for this observation can be any lecturer from the English department. After the teaching practice, the trainees submit their teaching portfolios with various materials to their leading methodologist. These materials include reflections on lessons, lesson plans, observation sheets, school documents, etc. The final consultation with the leading methodologist concludes the teaching practice.

### 3.2 Research progress

The next step of the research was the observation of lessons taught by trainee teachers during the observation and of the following analysis with the supervisor.

Since it is common practice that the supervisors coming for the observation are both methodologists and non-methodologists, both cases were included into the research. After each observation the trainees were asked their opinion about the analysis with the supervisor. These interviews were free, non-structured and not recorded.

The following step was semi-structured recorded interviews with trainee teachers. To support the data obtained from the interview, another method was included in the research, i.e. analysis of trainees' teaching portfolios.

### **3.3 Research ethics**

In order to preserve anonymity the names of the participants or persons who participated in the research were either changed or omitted completely. Also the materials that the participants offered for the analyses will not be published in their original form but only their interpretation.

### **3.4 Observation**

The observations took place in 5 lessons taught by the trainee teachers and in the following discussions between the participants – trainee teachers, supervisors and potentially with the teacher mentors. All students were second semester students in their master studies and were attending their first teaching practice. Two of these students also attended the recorded semi-structured interview later.

There were 4 supervisors, 1 of them with two students. Two supervisors were methodologists and the other two were lecturers of non-methodological subjects from the department. After each observation, non-structured interviews were conducted with the trainee teachers.

#### **3.4.1 Analysis and interpretation of data**

It would not be appropriate to record these analyses because of negatives influences of the recording on the participants. The material that arose from these observations were field notes, therefore it should be stressed that the utterances do not have to correspond to the original wording of the person. However, the meaning should be preserved. To differentiate between supervisor's and trainee's utterances, the topics expressed by supervisors are written in italics while those by the trainee are written in normal type.

### 3.4.2 Analysis No. 1

**Analysis:** During office hours, several days after the observation

**Location:** Teacher's room at the university

**Length:** 30 min

**The persons present:** trainee, supervisor (non-methodologist)

The analysis follows the structure of the lesson.

The supervisor talks predominantly more than the trainee. The trainee writes down some notes from time to time.

#### 3.4.2.1 Topics discussed during the analysis

##### **Time- management**

*good time- management*

*extra activities for pupils who had already finished*

##### **class-management**

*I like that you gave extra materials to pupils who had finished so that they did not have time to misbehave*

*There was a group that was bit louder and livelier but it was ok within this activity*

*extra activities for pupils who had already finished*

##### **Aims**

*aims of the lesson were not announced, but obvious*

*formulation of aims is not so important for pupils as for the teachers*

*the lesson met its aims*

*I would formulated the lesson aims through the following can-do statements: ...*

##### **Interaction in the class**

*involvement of pupils in activities, pupils working in groups, pairs*

##### **Types of activities**

*controlled practice - minimum*

*rather semi - controlled practice - visual aids (pictures, blackboard)*

*free practice dominated - a big advantage*

##### **Language and accuracy**

*putting emphasis on the langue aspect of the language*

*putting emphasis on training of the morpho - syntactic accuracy of the structure*

*I found your language too complicated for the pupils in the beginning of the lesson, later it was ok*

**Improvisation**

*I appreciate your improvisation*

**Learning environment**

*positive relationship with pupils*

*positive atmosphere*

*pupils seemed to forget that they are learning*

**Habits of pupils**

Pupils at this school are not used to the teacher terminating the lesson, they just stand up with the bell and leave class.

*”Despite this habit you were able to terminate the lesson in a suitable way*

**Instructions**

*in two cases the instructions could have been more precise, it is better to say instructions in advance – before distributing the materials*

**Teaching style**

*absence of frontal teaching - positive*

*simulation of real -life situations*

*pupils seemed to forget that they are learning*

**Communicativeness**

*simulation of real-life situations*

*free practice dominated*

**Teaching experience from outside the faculty**

*also the previous experience with teaching is apparent (note: the trainee teaches outside the faculty)*

*I observed another trainee whose teaching practice was her first teaching experience and the difference is noticeable*

**Talent**

*also talent plays important role*

**3.4.2.2 Opinion of the trainees on the analysis**

I was very satisfied with the feedback from my supervisor. It took 30 minutes and I am very grateful for this feedback. I also wrote down some notes.

**3.4.3 Analysis No. 2**

**Analysis:** the following day after the observation

**Length:** 30 min

**Location:** teacher's room at school

**The persons present:** trainee, supervisor (methodologist), and the trainee's classmate

The analysis begins with trainee's self-evaluation, which follows the structure of a written reflection, followed by an analysis of individual activities by the supervisor. Supervisor listens first, then talks.

### **3.4.3.1 Topics discussed during the analysis**

#### **Reflection**

I have written the reflection down, I also compared the lesson with a parallel class where I taught the same lesson

I do not know if I am writing the reflection well

*reflection has to be learnt and trained, it is important to sit down and think the lesson through – then the topics start to arise*

#### **Lesson aims**

I managed to articulate the lesson aims clearly in a natural way so that pupils can understand them

I chose such an aim to make the lesson interesting for the pupils

#### **Voice**

I spoke loudly

#### **Language**

I spoke English, I avoided using Czech, pupils are used to Czech with their teacher so they tried to speak Czech during my lessons, **too**

#### **Learning environment**

I was positive

#### **Feeling of the trainee**

I have a good feeling

#### **Improvisation**

I forgot to turn on the CD player and I improvised and elicited vocabulary from pupils

*the improvisation was not apparent – it seemed as planned part of the activity*

#### **Time management**

*Your time-management was perfect*

In contrast to the plan I decided to go through the exercise very fast – the exercise would probably be unnecessary, it would take lot of time

I was surprised that the pupils were so fast, I expected that they would need more time because my teacher mentor warned me that crosswords take quite a bit of time  
*a different kind of correction might have taken too much time which would not have had the desired effect*

### **critical self-reflection**

I should have stressed the instructions stronger; some students did not understand what they should do

The activity" guess who" backfired on me when pupils were asking direct questions (is it ... ?) and did not formulate better questions

### **Reflection on pupils' understanding**

some students did not understand what they should do

### **habits of students**

I spoke English, however the pupils are used to using Czech with their teacher  
*write the date on the board: it is good to have rituals, students switch the mode "the lesson started"*

### **Influence of the mentor**

My teacher mentor advised me to write the date on the board

My teacher mentor advised me that only one pupil from the group writes at the time

My teacher mentor warned me that the pupil's mother is very talkative

### **Giving instructions**

*while giving instructions some students were not paying attention*

*first materials and then instructions -> better first instruction and then distribute papers*

*you should first ensure pupils pay attention and then give instructions*

*you could have stopped giving instructions, win their attention and then give the instructions again*

### **Effectiveness of activities**

*act out a word - useless, because someone had already said the meaning of the word*

I decided to go through the exercise very fast - probably unnecessary, it would take too much time

I managed to make smooth transition between the activities

when playing "guess who" the pupils were asking direct questions (is it ... ?) and did not formulate better questions

### **Error correction**

*You corrected the pupil by repeating the word after him in the correct form, which was absolutely adequate in that situation – different kind of correction might have taken too much time which would not have had desired effect*

### **Alternative solutions**

*Instructions "Why don't you sit down to the girls?" - the pupil did not follow the instruction -> better would be "Sit down to the girls, please"*

*first materials and then instructions -> better first instruction and then distribute papers*

*this is only my suggestion, you know the pupils better than me and you are in a better position to judge whether it would work with them or not*

### **Class-management**

*effective class-management, just calling the misbehaving pupil by their name managed to maintain the discipline*

*when working in groups only one pupil from each group was writing at a time, the others were not looking at him, especially the pupils at the back of the classroom were chatting in Czech*

*with the last activity "guess who" you managed to maintain the attention of pupils again*

### **Enjoyment of the lesson**

Based on previous experience with this activity I thought that it might be fun for the pupils - we had done it before and they had enjoyed it

I chose such an aim so that the lesson was fun

I think she (the pupil) enjoyed the lesson as much as others

### **3.4.3.2 Opinion of both trainees on the analysis (non-structured interview immediately following the analysis)**

The supervisor is very nice. Everything he says is very clear and uncomplicated. Even critiques sound very positive. He is very diligent. During the observation in the classroom he was writing down so many things. He gave concrete tips. The feedback definitely made sense and helped us.



### 3.4.4 Analysis No. 3

**Analysis:** immediately after the lesson

**Length:** 10 min

**Location:** teacher's room at school

**The persons present:** trainee, supervisor (methodologist) and teacher mentor

The analysis begins with self-evaluation of the trainee, followed by an overall assessment by the supervisor.

The supervisor rather talks than listens.

#### 3.4.4.1 Topics discussed during the analysis

##### **Reflection**

*teacher mentor:* the trainee has a great ability to reflect, he is able to apply my advice already in the following lesson

I am here to improve

My teacher mentor said that I made progress

##### **Feeling of the trainee**

I enjoyed it

##### **Time management**

*very good time management*

##### **Class management**

*good class management*

*activation of pupils*

##### **Lesson structure**

*good lesson structure*

*good start of the lesson: game with words*

##### **Talent**

*you have inborn talent to be a teacher*

*you behave naturally*

##### **Aims**

*The only thing I could criticise is the fact that you did not articulate the lesson aim and at the end you did not sum up the lesson.*

##### **Influence of the teacher mentor**

My teacher mentor said that I made progress

##### **Overall evaluation**

*You can be satisfied*

*You made use of your teaching practice*

*You behave naturally*

**supervisor's feeling**

*You surprised me very positively*

#### **3.4.4.2 Trainee's opinion on the analysis (non-structured interview - after the analysis)**

Teaching practice was very helpful, mainly thanks to the feedback of my teacher mentor with whom I discussed every lesson. I guess it is more beneficial for my development than the analysis of one single lesson by the supervisor. I did not expect that I would learn something from this analysis. However, I think that the analysis with the supervisor fulfilled what I had expected from it. It was brief and contained all essential aspects. I was pleased by the supervisor's nice manners towards me. The analysis motivated me and assured me that I might be a good teacher.

#### **3.4.5 Analysis No. 4**

**Analysis:** The following day after the observation

**Length:** 20 min

**Location:** Teacher's room

**The persons present:** trainee, supervisor (methodologist), trainee's classmate and for the last 10 min also the teacher mentor

The analysis begins with trainee's self-assessment followed by an analysis of individual activities by the supervisor.

Supervisor listens first then talks.

##### **3.4.5.1 Topics discussed during the analysis**

###### **Class-management**

*while checking the homework, you should have had a greater insight into how the pupils are working*

###### **Time-management**

*with the last activity it seemed that you lost time awareness, because of that it was even more difficult to calm the pupils down and assign the homework*

*when distributing the material you could have saved time if you had taken all the materials at once and not returning for them several times*

*drawing lots was a waste of time - teacher mentor: it is interesting for the kids*

### **critical self-reflection**

I did not call on all pupils

I did not correct pupils, they made mistakes, such as "she is a short"

Pupils were playing with plastic bags

### **Alternative solutions**

Next time I would write it on the blackboard for visual aids

I would replace the plastic bags with envelopes

*pupils were supposed to say phrases in different emotions (happy, sad, ..) it was not very apparent -> maybe it would help to exaggerate those emotions – it might be fun for the pupils*

### **Lesson structure**

I think that the lesson had good structure

I included all skills, such as reading, writing, listening, speaking

smooth transition between activities

### **Lesson aims**

*You mentioned lesson aims in adequate way*

### **Language and Accuracy**

I spoke only English

I did not correct pupils, they made mistakes, such as "she is a short"

### **Learning environment**

pupils were sleepy

I was nice to them

*You have created very positive atmosphere*

*dynamic personality -> transmission to children*

### **Habits of pupils**

*I liked the revision of phrases from the last lesson, it is a very nice ritual - pupils are used to it from their teacher mentor*

### **Motivation of pupils**

*nice colorful pictures – you won pupils' attention*

### **Materials**

*nice colorful pictures*

### **Activities**

*very nice activities*

*I prepared them according to the teacher's book*

### **Giving instructions**

*better to give instructions first, then distribute material or tell pupils not to touch them*

*teacher mentor: I have a trick that pupils should put their hands on the ears, etc.*

*I liked your gestures as "close your books", etc.*

### **Feeling of the trainee**

I was nervous

*Teacher mentor: compared to the previous lessons it was obvious that the trainee was nervous*

### **Error correction**

I did not correct pupils and they made mistakes

### **Opinion of both trainees (non-structured interview - after analysis)**

The supervisor is very nice; he says everything very clearly, in uncomplicated way.

Even critique sounds very positive.

He gave concrete tips.

During the observation he was writing many things.

He is very diligent.

Feedback certainly made sense and helped us.

### **3.4.5.2 Analysis with teacher mentor**

With the same trainee it was possible also to observe immediate analysis after the lesson with the teacher mentor

**Analysis:** during the break immediately after the lesson

**Duration:** 5 min

**Location:** classroom

#### **3.4.5.2.1 Topics discussed during the analysis**

##### **Accuracy**

*Correction of mistakes was missing, pupils were talking in pairs: "It's a short"*

*It is important that pupils develop accurate habits in language*

##### **Alternative solutions**

*Next time you should have more control, you might divide pupils into different groups: when they are together with the same pupils all the time they learn mistakes from each other*

### **Unexpected happening in the class**

Pupils were playing with the plastic bags

*Children can always surprise you again and again*

### **3.4.6 Analysis No. 5**

Unfortunately, it was not possible to attend the analysis with the supervisor in person, therefore only there are only field notes from an interview with the trainee and from the insight on the observation sheet. However, it is interesting to include it in the research as well, because it showed different aspects of the critique.

**Analysis:** during the break after the observation

**Length:** maximum 10 min

**Location:** in the classroom

**The persons present:** trainee, supervisor (non-methodologist)

#### **3.4.6.1 Topics discussed during the analysis**

##### **Language**

*Speaking in English: clear formulation*

##### **Time management**

*good time management*

*the game lasted too long*

##### **Materials**

*Preparation of extra material*

##### **Class-management**

*Good discipline*

##### **Organization**

*systematical approach*

##### **Activities**

*less diversity in the end*

##### **Learning environment**

*trainee was smiling, entertaining the pupils*

##### **Demeanor**

*I recommend more self-confident demeanor*

#### **3.4.6.2 Opinion of the trainee on the analysis:**

The supervisor was full of praise, which I did not expect and it truly surprised me because I am aware of the fact that I am only a trainee and it is improbable that I would do everything right. The supervisor criticized the little diversity in the end of the lesson, which I agree with because the game we played took too much time. Overall, I think that this feedback did not help me at all.

#### **3.4.6.3 Analysis with teacher mentor**

With the same student there was an opportunity to attend a lesson analysis with her teacher mentor.

**Analysis:** during the break immediately after the lesson

**Duration:** 5 min

**Location:** in a busy corridor on a window sill

The analysis follows exercises from the students' book and workbook.

The teacher mentor talks predominantly.

##### **3.4.6.3.1 Topics discussed during the analysis**

###### **Planning**

*what you did in 1 lesson should be done in one week*

*if you went so fast through the textbook, then the textbook would not be enough to the end of the year*

*"you must also make marks from something as reading, vocabulary and so on"*

###### **Quality of teaching**

*You went through the subject matter superficially, it is not enough for pupils to learn it properly, they did not have enough opportunity to practice*

*You should have gone more into depth*

*You asked a question to which pupils could not know the answer, yet because they did not have time to even look at the comics*

*I appreciate that you reviewed the questions that the pupils had found difficult the last time*

###### **Alternative solutions**

*Going through the comics and doing 2 exercises would be enough*

*it is necessary to translate the text, even when it is only comics: students are not able to work with text in English and need to learn it in a simpler text first*

*you could have practiced vocabulary and phrases with them, do exercises in the workbook*

*I recommend that you review the subject matter next lesson - although there is too much even for reviewing*

### **Habits of students**

*at the beginning of the lesson I always do an oral examination from the new vocabulary, therefore they are used to learning the new vocabulary but if I did not do it, they would not learn the vocabulary*

#### **3.4.6.3.2 Trainee's opinion on the analysis:**

The teacher is present at all my lessons, which I find very useful since I get feedback after every lesson. Unfortunately, she wants me to use the grammar translation method, which is in contrast with what we learned at the university – emphasis on communicativeness. The teacher mentor does not refer to any theory during the analysis and I think that the teacher mentor might not even be aware of the theory much since she only has a bachelor's degree.

#### **3.4.7 Interpretation**

Two of the analyses took place immediately after the observation and were significantly shorter than those that took place with a time lag. The both analyses that took place immediately after the inspection lasted about 10 minutes, while the delayed ones from 20 to 30 minutes. This definitely might be only a coincidence and any conclusions cannot be drawn based on this observation. However, the delayed analysis seems to offer opportunity to think through the lesson and topics for analysis..

The duration of an analysis seems not to be dependent on the fact whether the supervisor is a methodologist or not. There were both methodologist and non-methodologist supervisors whose analyses took 10 minutes and again both whose analyses took 30 minutes.

In general, the longer the analyses the more specific issues were addressed and the topics were discussed more in depth. For the shorter analyses, it was typical that the supervisors mainly expressed an overall evaluation as *good time management, very good time management, good discipline, good structure, good start of the lesson, you can be satisfied, you made use of your teaching practice* or generally addressed trainee's qualities or behaviour as *trainee was smiling, trainee*

*was entertaining pupils, I recommend more self-confident demeanour, you have inborn talent to be a teacher and you behave naturally.*

For the longer analyses, it was typical that the supervisors followed the structure of the lesson and commented on concrete activities. For example: *with the last activity it seemed, that..., during checking homework you should have had..., you started the lesson by writing the date on the board, which is...* The longer analyses can be characterized by more detailed description of individual topics. As an example of a more detailed elaboration on the topic of class management see the following: *“effective class-management: just calling the misbehaving pupil by their name managed to maintain the discipline. ...only one pupil from each group was writing at a time, while the others were not looking at him, and especially the pupils at the back of the classroom were chatting in Czech, however with the last activity “guess who” you managed to maintain the attention of pupils again.”* This elaboration resulted in trainees self-critique: *“I should have stressed the instructions; some students did not understand what they should do.”*

As another example, see the following elaboration on the learning environment by the other supervisor: *“You managed to establish a very positive relationship with the pupils. The atmosphere in the classroom was very positive. Pupils seemed to forget that they are learning and it seemed they are somewhere outside school. You chose such activities that were close to real-life situations.”*

The most common topics discussed during the analyses were **time-management** (mentioned in all 5 cases), **lesson aims** (5), **class-management** (4), **instructions** (4), **language and accuracy** (4), and **learning environment** (4).

The topic of **time management** was mentioned in the all analyses. There was the general evaluation such as *“good time- management”* or *“Your time-management was perfect”* as well as a description of individual activities as *“the game lasted too long”*. Time management played role in lesson planning as obvious from the trainee’s statement *“the exercise would take too much time”* or *“I expected that pupils would need more time”* as well as in reflecting on the past happening: *“I was surprised that the pupils were so fast”, “with the last activity it seemed that you lost time awareness” and “you could have saved time if you had taken all the papers at once and not returning for them several times”*. The importance of time effective usage was demonstrated in some kind of negotiating what should be done during the limited time in the classroom and whether its contribution is worth the



time, as in *“different kind of correction might have taken too much time which would not have had the desired effect in that particular situation”*. Naturally, the judgment whether the contribution of an activity is beneficial is rather subjective. In one case the supervisor found one pre-activity to be waste of time (*“drawing lots was waste of time”*) while the teacher mentor stressed the enjoyment of this activity for the pupils (*“it is interesting for the kids”*). These different attitudes do not represent only different preferences of individual teachers but also show the permanent decision-making of a teacher in general. The time in classroom is limited so the teacher has to constantly consider its effective use while not neglecting other essential aspects for fruitful learning.

Another commonly mentioned topic was **class-management**. There were, again, general evaluations as *“good class management”*, *“good discipline”*, *“effective class-management”* and *“good activation of pupils”* as well as more concrete demonstrations as *“just calling on the misbehaving pupil by their name managed to maintain the discipline”* and *“you managed to win the attention of pupils again”*. Discussion about class management addressed various topics, for example, pupils’ lack of work and their subsequent misbehaving *“only one pupil from each group was writing at the time while the others were looking at him/her, and especially the pupils at the back of the classroom were chatting in Czech”* and *“I like that you gave extra materials to pupils who had finished earlier so that they did not have time to misbehave”*. Another topic was for example the noise: *“There was a group that was bit louder and livelier but it was ok within this activity”* or trainee’s checking on pupils’ work: *“During checking homework you should have had greater insight into how pupils are working”*

Another topic that appeared during all analyses was **lesson aims** and especially their announcement to the pupils. For illustration see the following: *“The aims of the lesson were not announced, but obvious”*, *“I think that formulation of aims is not so important for pupils as for the teachers”*, *“I managed to articulate the lesson aims clearly in a natural way so that pupils could understand them”*, *“You did not articulate the lesson aims and at the end you did not sum up the lesson”*, *“I would formulate the aims of your lesson through the following can-do statements ...”* and *“you mentioned lesson aims in an adequate way”*. Other points mentioned were, whether the lesson met its aims *“the lesson met its aims”* and about

motivation for choosing the particular lesson aims: “I chose such lesson aim in order to make the lesson interesting for the pupils.”

Another frequent topic was **instructions**. There were mainly two situations discussed and these were the formulation of instructions “ *in two cases the instructions could have been more precise*” and the sequence of giving instructions: “*It is better to give instructions first, then distribute materials or tell pupils not to touch them*”, “*some pupils were not paying attention, you should have first ensured that pupils pay attention and then give instructions*” and “*you could have stopped giving instructions, win their attention and then give the instructions again*”. The supervisors especially stressed giving instructions before distributing papers: “*You gave them materials first and then instructions; it is better to give instructions first and then to distribute papers.*” and “*it is better to say instructions in advance, before distributing the materials*”,

Most of the analyses contained certain comments on a positive **learning environment**, which shows awareness of the importance of the environment for learning, but again they were mostly general evaluation or plain description without deeper elaboration: “*You had positive relationship with pupils*”, “*there was positive atmosphere*”, “ *I was positive*”, “*You created very positive atmosphere*”, “*pupils were sleepy*”, “*I was nice to them*” and “*trainee was smiling and entertaining pupils*”. More specific points mentioning learning environment came from two different supervisors. One pointed out the trainee’s achievement of getting all the pupils involved in the activities: “*Pupils seemed to forget that they are learning and enjoyed the activities as if they were, for example, outside school playing.*” While the second one stressed the trainee’s personal qualities contributing positively to the learning environment: “*You have a dynamic personality and it is naturally transmitted to the children*”.

Significant parts of the analyses offered **alternative solutions** or different pieces of advice. There are notes only from two short analyses with teacher mentors but in comparison to the analyses with supervisors, these two analyses were purely based on giving practical advice: “*next time you might divide pupils into different groups*”, “ *Error correction was missing, next time you should have more control.*”, “*I recommend that you review the subject matter again*”, “*You should have gone more into depth*”, “*Going through the comics and do 2 exercises would be*

*enough.”, “it is necessary to translate the text”, “ you could have practiced vocabulary and phrases, do exercises in the workbook”.*

Also the supervisors gave various pieces of advice as for example: “Instead of ‘*Why don’t you sit down*’ to the girls?’ which the pupil did not follow, it would be better to say “‘*Sit down*’ to the girls, please’ ”, “when distributing the material you could have saved time if you..”, “maybe it would help to exaggerate the emotions – it might be fun for the pupils”, “ ...however, this is only my suggestion, you know the pupils better than me and you are in better position to judge whether it would work with them or not”, “I recommend more self-confident demeanour”, and many others. Also trainees themselves were coming with own alternative solutions: “Next time I would write it on the blackboard for visual aids” or “I would replace the plastic bags with envelopes.”

**Language and accuracy** were also mentioned but not in very much in detail, usually very generally like “I spoke only English”, “*the trainee was speaking in English using clear formulation*”, “I avoided using Czech ”, “pupils are used to Czech with their teacher so they tried to speak Czech also during my lessons”. Only one supervisor commented on the language accuracy more specifically: “*You put emphasis on the langue aspect of the language*”, “*you also paid attention to the morpho-syntactic accuracy of the structure*”. Overall, there was no negative comment on trainees’ English.

Trainees expressed also their **feelings** as “I have a good feeling about the lesson”, “I enjoyed it” and “I was nervous”.

Supervisors generally did not talk about their feelings except of one statement: “*You positively surprised me, you seemed to me, to be rather a spoilsport during lectures*”.

Another topic that arose from the observations was **habits of pupils**.

The habits were mentioned either as rituals contributing positively to learning “*you wrote the date on the board - it is good to have rituals, students switch the mode ‘the lesson started’ ”* and “*at the beginning of each lesson I always examine new vocabulary orally, pupils are therefore used to learning new vocabulary before every lesson.*” or as a certain obstacle “pupils of this school are not used to the teacher terminating a lesson, so they just stand up with the bell and leave the class”,

“*Despite this habit you were able to terminate the lesson in a suitable way*”  
and

“pupils are used to using Czech with their teacher so they tried to speak Czech in my lessons also”.

**Reflection** itself was not a common point in the analyses, yet interesting for this research. One supervisor asked the trainees to prepare the reflection before the analysis. One of them prepared it in her head, the other one wrote it down. The analysis started with their reflection first and then the supervisor’s comments came. One of these trainees was concerned about the following: “I do not know if I am writing the reflection well. I am afraid that what I wrote is a narration rather than reflection”. The supervisor reacted: *“Reflection has to be learnt and trained. The sense of reflection is to sit down and think the lesson through, then the topics start to arise.”*

In another case the trainee teacher expressed awareness of importance of professional development: “I am here to improve. My teacher mentor said that I made progress.” The Mentor immediately reacted: *“He has made huge progress. He has a great ability to reflect, he is already able to apply my advice in the following lesson.”*

There were naturally more topics mentioned during the analyses. Topics that appeared in more than one analysis were: **talent** *“also talent plays important role”* and *“you have inborn talent to be a teacher”*, **improvisation** *“I forgot to turn on the CD player so I improvised and elicited vocabulary from pupils”, “the improvisation was not apparent, it seemed as planned part of the activity”* and *“I appreciate your improvisation”*, **error correction** *“I did not correct pupils”, “You corrected the pupil by repeating the word after him in the correct form”*

A few trainees referred also to the **influence of their mentor**: “My teacher mentor advised me to write the date on the board”, “My teacher mentor advised me, that only one pupil from the group writes at the time”, “My teacher mentor warned me that the pupil’s mother is very talkative” and

“My teacher mentor said that I made progress”

What **trainees’ opinions on the analyses’** concerns, in the first place all trainees appreciated the nice manners and positive approach of their supervisors. Trainees were usually also satisfied with the quality of the feedback. There was only one trainee that did not see any benefit of the feedback received. Three trainees considered the sense of the analyses in receiving some food for thought, while in one case the trainee considered the feedback to be purely motivational.

### **3.5 The interview**

The interview was conducted with 5 trainee teachers, 2 men and 3 women. Three students were in the second semester of follow-up master studies which means they have just finished their first teaching practice and their experience was very fresh and 2 people studying the fourth semester of the follow-up master studies, which means they had experienced both teaching practices and had the benefit of hindsight.

Interview with open questions was chosen since it offers more freedom to the participants to elaborate on the topic. According to suggestions by Švaříček and Šed'ová the structure of the interview was divided into warm-up questions, main questions and final questions. (163-176) The main research question and the specific research questions were reformulated into individual interview questions.

All interviews were recorded. And for their subsequent transcription it was necessary to use certain level of reduction was. So, the criteria set for the reduction were: omitting fillers, slips of the tongue, repeated statements and any other redundant elements that have no importance for the content. Grammatically and stylistically replaceable words were reformulated so that the content is not affected. Since the focus lies on the content, pauses or various voices were not transcribed either. For the whole wording of interviews see the appendixes.

#### **3.5.1 Interpretation**

**Daniela**, second semester student

- Observed by non-methodologist

During her teaching practice Daniela reflected after every lesson. She wrote down a few key points and came back to them later and thought them through. Everyday after school she analysed the happenings of that day with her teacher mentor. These analyses took usually 20 minutes. Furthermore, she consulted with her classmate, with whom they were observing each other's lessons, about her experiences. After filling in their final self-evaluation, they checked each other's answers because, as Daniela thinks, it is difficult to evaluate her own competencies.

Daniela worked with all levels of reflection (according to Korthagen's model). The prevailing topic she was concerned with was discipline. She puts huge emphasis on establishing a friendly learning environment for her pupils but her

friendliness collides with good discipline. For the future she wants to focus on looking for the balance between these two aspects. During the teaching practice she got reassured that she is able to make lessons enjoyable and communicative. She also discovered that some of her beliefs and feelings (such as the belief that the boys will misbehave or that she feels sick) might have a negative influence on her pupils and their learning, so she set the goal of avoiding such influences in the future.

Daniela also asked for feedback from her pupils, which she finds very important. In comparison to feedback from outside (from mentor or supervisor) she can find out how pupils felt in her lesson and what they did or did not enjoy. She considers the fact that her pupils forgot they were learning as the best praise she could receive.

Daniela was also satisfied with feedback from her supervisor, who was a non-methodologist, yet gave her high-quality feedback. She does not want to speculate but she thinks that she was rather an exception among her classmates to have 30 minutes of analysis with her supervisor. She questions the concept of non-methodologists as supervisors and suggests some support for the non-methodologist observers so that all students can get high-quality feedback.

In the interview Daniela also mentioned other kinds of support for her reflection. The final questionnaire of professional competencies gave her an overview of important professional fields. She also wrote notes from reflecting on individual lessons into her teaching portfolio.

**Robert**, second semester student

- Observed by methodologist

During his teaching practice Robert's main method of reflection was thinking the lessons through. He played the lesson in his head again asking himself what he could improve. The most important source of impulse for his reflection were comments from his teacher mentor, who according to Robert was very good in giving feedback. His teacher mentor observed his lessons writing down many points and afterwards they analysed the lesson together for about ten minutes. The teacher mentor usually gave him a task for the next time on what he should focus closer so that he gets better. She positively evaluated his reflective skills also in front of his supervisor.

The topics of the talks with his teacher mentor mainly concerned the subject matter, methods and interactions in the classroom. Robert also consulted his lesson plans and based on mentor's suggestions, he sometimes even changed the plans at the last moment. The teacher mentor also advised Robert to give pupils tests to check their understanding of the subject matter. He found this kind of feedback from pupils very helpful since he considers it very important that pupils learn something in his lessons. He says he made connections between pupils' mistakes and methods he used when teaching. This feedback also depicted his improvement in choice of methods and in their use.

What levels of reflection according to Korthagen were concerned, Robert reflected on the levels of environment and behaviour but the most important levels for him were the level of competencies and the level of mission. He was concerned about whether his pupils liked the language and enjoyed his lessons. He did not reflect on the level of beliefs even though he admits they might have had some influence on his teaching and the students' learning.

He thinks he managed to make lessons fun for the pupils and tried to involve every pupil in the activities, even though he doubts he was successful all the time. Robert tried to empathise with his pupils also through his own experience as learner.

Robert evaluated the feedback from his supervisor positively. He thinks the analysis contained all essential aspects. The main contribution of this feedback, according to Robert, lies in the reassurance that he is on the right track to becoming a good teacher. He cannot determine any contribution of this feedback for his further teaching, but he believes this was caused by the fact that the supervisor observed only one lesson, which is very little.

Robert thinks the university equipped him well with theory. However, he believes it is difficult to learn something from the field at university and that everyone has to learn it during the teaching practice. He personally would appreciate if the teaching practice was longer but he also sees there would be problems with other courses at the university, so he concludes that he does not consider himself to be the right person to judge this issue. He would definitely suggest less paperwork and would prefer if the first teaching practice would be considered more as a try.

**Radka**, fourth semester student

- Observed by non-methodologists during both practices

Radka reflected on lessons when preparing her lesson plans. After the lesson she wrote various notes that she wanted to consider later when preparing the next lesson plan. She said that she neither had time nor need to reflect deeper because she did not encounter any bigger problems. She was usually thinking about procedures and sequence of activities. She struggled with the formulation of lesson aims, because she found it difficult to formulate a “can-do” statement. She found it easier to formulate the lesson aim through statements from the teacher’s perspective “*to teach them ...*”. Radka did not always set the lesson aim for each single lesson but sometimes for the whole sequence of lessons. She spent lot of time by preparing for the lessons and she considers her lessons to be well organized. On the other hand, she hopes to learn in the future how to plan lessons of the same quality but faster.

What the levels of reflection according to Korthagen were her concerns, Radka claims to have reflected only on the first two levels of environment and behaviour because she did not have any need to go deeper. However, on the level of beliefs she realizes she changed her opinion about some pupils during the teaching practice. Even though she tries to avoid pigeon-holing, she admits it is difficult. On the level of professional identity, Radka had one concern that her status of trainee teacher would decrease her authority, which turned out to be a groundless fear.

She doubts the quality of feedback she got from both teacher mentors as well as from supervisors from university. Even though her teacher mentors were nice and willing to help, Radka got very little feedback and only when she initiated the discussion. The feedback she got from her first teacher mentor usually concerned things she was aware of herself. The second teacher mentor only praised her, which Radka found nice but not very helpful.

Both supervisors, who came for the observations were non-methodologists. The first one admitted she did not feel authorized to give feedback and that she can base it only on what she remembers from her studies. Nevertheless, this supervisor provided Radka with some feedback, as for example by pointing out missing lesson aims in the lesson plans. The second supervisor did not have time for any analysis and the only feedback was in the form of a filled sheet in Radka’s portfolio. There



were points evaluating individual aspects but without any further comments. This feedback was rather more confusing than helpful. However, Radka thinks that her lessons were well prepared and already pre-tested, so there was not much to criticize anyway. Also feedback from pupils was not very helpful since pupils did not follow the criteria and wrote similar phrases like: “I liked the lesson”.

Radka also had two consultations with the leading methodologist of her first practice with whom she discussed how to reflect and on what she should base her reflection. Radka had to rewrite her reflections because they did not meet the requirements. She thinks that now she knows much better how to write reflection. Her second practice was led by a different methodologist, with whom there was no consultation at all.

Radka would suggest more micro-teaching at university before teaching practice with a bigger focus on reflection. She would also prefer if the course of pedagogical and psychological practice and reflection took place before the teaching practice. There are enough lesson observations during the mentioned pedagogical and psychological practice so she would replace them with teaching lessons so that there is more teaching during the practice.

**Sandra**, fourth semester student

- Observed by non-methodologist during the first practice
- Observed by methodologist via video recording during the second practice

Sandra based her reflection mainly on talks with her teacher mentor. She appreciated that her teacher mentor was very friendly and understanding while being also critical in beneficial way. They consulted after every lesson, describing what happened in the class, for example how Sandra explained the subject matter, how pupils were working and what kind of interactions were taking place. The mentor asked Sandra questions like what she could have done differently and what was limiting her to do it in that way and what would she change if she was teaching the lesson again. She also asked where Sandra feels to have deficiencies and why. Further, they talked about pupils and their attitudes and behaviour and made characteristics of all classes from this point of view. They also dealt with individual pupils and their learning. During the consultation Sandra also checked her lesson plans with her teacher mentor.

Sandra would praise herself for the fact that she did not make any big methodological mistakes while teaching and that she did not disturb the teacher's plan. She would like to improve her writing on the blackboard. She was also told that she is too friendly which seemed to Sandra that it was working perfectly with the pupils. However, she admits that it is probably true that if she stayed longer the discipline might get worse.

What levels of reflection according to Korthagen were her concerns, Sandra reflected with help of her mentor on all of them while on the first three (environment, behaviour, competencies) after every lesson. On the level of belief she reflected on individual pupils and characteristics of whole classes. She had a pupil with Asperger's syndrome in the class who was another subject of reflection.

The lesson observation during the second teaching practice was mediated through video recording and the subsequent talk with supervisor was very short. She was told that she had the situation in the classroom under control and the students were working. Sandra found this feedback good in the way that it did not ruin her good feeling from the practice. She remembers that the supervisor from the first teaching practice criticized her English and told her she is a terrible teacher, even though she finally got excellent mark for the practice.

Sandra felt prepared for the teaching practice thanks to her personal teaching experience. She thinks that what she had learnt at university was not shown directly in the lessons as much as during the reflection, for example she knew how to make a lesson plan, how to structure a lesson, how to name each steps of the lesson and how to set lesson aims. What she did not learn at university was writing on the blackboard, working with an interactive board, filling in a register and to be familiar with school documents. But what she was missing the most during her practice was some preparation for work with pupils who have an assistant in the class. She said she would appreciate if she knew at least what are the specifics of such pupils.

#### **Peter**, second semester student

Peter reflected mainly in his head. He would describe his reflective approach as rather intuitive. He prefers to reflect using common sense relying more on own feelings than on academic literature. When he was writing reflection for the leading methodologist of his practice he based the paper on his own impressions and looked

for inspiration in a methodological course from bachelor, which he found very practical. Peter admits that he and other classmates are uncertain about how to write a proper reflection.

What the methods of reflection concern Peter claims there was no systematic reflection. The only significant method of his reflection was thinking about the lesson. Except of that and writing reflections for the course, he sometimes discussed the lessons with his relative who is a teacher, he observed others teaching and he got some feedback from pupils. This feedback only assured him that the opinions and ideas of pupils are in harmony with his own beliefs. According to the interview it seems that teacher mentor as well as the supervisor did not have any significant influence on Peter's reflection.

Peter reflected on what occurred in his lessons, why it occurred and what he would do differently the next time. He was concerned about how to motivate pupils and how to keep professional distance while caring about good relationships with pupils. Peter sees his strength in putting emphasis on practical language and pronunciation. He believes this is the most important thing what pupils should learn. On the other hand he would like to improve his spelling and learn to be stricter with his pupils. He thinks he should not empathise with them too much in order to be fair and to maintain authority.

In the university preparation, he would suggest leaving out all academic subjects that are unrelated to teaching in favour of methodological courses. He would appreciate if the methodological courses were more practically oriented or if there was an additional subject purely focused on practical exercise. More observations or longer teaching practice would be other options, too. Peter believes that the department should care more about the language proficiency of both lecturers and students.

### **3.6 Analysis of portfolio and overall interpretation**

The third research method was analysis of materials, i.e. trainees' teaching portfolios. These portfolios commonly contain such materials that collect information about the teaching practice experience. These are usually lesson plans, reflections, observation sheets, evaluations from teacher mentors and supervisors. The content of the portfolio is also subject of trainee's consultation with the leading

methodologist, which takes place after the practice. For the complexity of the research, the trainees were also asked about their opinion on the above-mentioned consultation. The following part elaborates analyses of portfolio materials, which belong to the same participants who took part in the interviews; therefore it could support or challenge their statements.

### **3.6.1 Daniela**

- second semester student

Daniela's portfolio includes observation sheets focused on various topics followed by reflection and various comments. In these reflections Daniela asks very often "How" and "Why". E.g.: She believes there could have been more pair work or group work employed in the lesson. She gives ideas how it could be done (brainstorming in pairs, checking listening in pairs, etc.) and tells why (more opportunity to communicate and use the language, shared responsibility can motivate pupils to get involved). To support her ideas there are also references to various authors.

The biggest part of the portfolio consists of 12 lesson plans with reflections. At first, a brief description of what happened is described in bullet points then the reflective elaboration on individual aspects follows. There are special marks to highlight what Daniela found positive or negative and she often uses BUT. One of the positive points concerned the fact that regarding the special habit of pupils to finish a lesson by standing up no matter what the teacher is doing, Daniela managed to finish the lesson earlier so that she had time for a wrap-up. In another reflection it is highlighted that she managed to get pupils involved in the activity so much that they wanted to finish it even after the bell. Another point addresses the fact that some boys were disruptive. Daniela reflected that it might have been caused by the low communicative potential of the activity, so she tried to implement more pair work but the boys still had to be reprimanded. She sets the goal to work on being stricter. The BUT in the following sentence represents the awareness of negatives of the activity but she gives reasons for the use despite these negatives: "The activity done in lock step meant that not all pupils were active BUT it was on purpose, I wanted to check their correct use of the second conditional."

The last interesting part of the portfolio is the Questionnaire of teacher's professional qualities. There were 8 areas of evaluation with space for self-

assessment. Daniela evaluated her competences by 8 or 9 (out of ten), describing her qualities positively while also including room for further development. For example, when commenting on communication and positive learning environment, she believes she created opportunities for pupils to communicate in pair and group work. She tried to create friendly environment and she treated all pupils with respect. In future she would like to focus on maintaining discipline. In the questionnaire there is also a box for teacher mentor's evaluation according to which Daniela reflects carefully - thinking about the lesson, being interested in feedback and actively looking for ways how to develop.

#### **3.6.1.1 Overall interpretation of Daniela's reflective skills and influence on them based on all accessible data**

Daniela's teaching portfolio only supports what emerged from the interview. She reflects systematically, using different methods of reflection, actively looking for ways of development. She asks herself reflective questions HOW and WHY and considers various positives and negatives. She also determines areas for improvement. In her reflection there is also reference to academic literature and she completes the reflective cycle till the last step, i.e. the trial. She appreciates every kind of feedback and according to accessible data it seems she got quality feedback from teacher mentor as well as from the supervisor. What the consultation with the methodologist concern, Daniela acknowledged being treated as a college, which improved her self-confidence regarding teaching.

#### **3.6.2 Robert**

- second semester student

Unfortunately Robert had to rewrite his reflections because they did not meet the requirements of the leading methodologist, who thought that the reflection is rather shallow, so Robert did not feel confident to present his rejected papers and he has not written the new reflection, yet. However, he expressed he feels overloaded with paperwork while studying for exams, therefore he cannot say whether the consultation with the methodologist had any benefit for him but he is sure that the teaching practice made definitely sense.

### **3.6.3 Radka**

- fourth semester student

Radka could find only 2 lesson reflections, each of them from different practice. The previous reflection from the first teaching practice did not meet the requirements of the leading methodologist and had to be rewritten. The second reflection already follows the nature of the rewritten one. There is a table with a lesson plan and various comments to each activity. E.g.: “I thought that it is useless to play the recording again because pupils seemed to have it done. However, Harmer stresses that “Once will not be enough”, so next time I will ask pupils explicitly if they need to listen to it again.” The reflection also includes paragraphs what “was good” and “what I could improve”. These paragraphs included topics like: “well-structured lesson – many various activities, enough time to practice, enjoyable form” x “pupils were annoyed because they had already done the phenomena, therefore I should have made sure that the objective of the activity is clear to them”. The analysis with the leading methodologist showed Radka that she should go deeper in her reflections relying more on academic literature.

#### **3.6.3.1 Overall interpretation of Radka’s reflective skills and influence on them based on all accessible data**

Radka’s portfolio confirms that her reflection is closely connected to her lesson planning. Since she reflected primarily when planning the next lesson plan she did not have any need to reflect deeper. Concerning the little feedback from teacher mentors as well as supervisors, Radka probably started to reflect deeper only after the analysis with the methodologist. Now Radka sees the importance of reflection and wishes there had been more reflected micro-teaching activities at university.

### **3.6.4 Sandra**

- fourth semester student

From Sandra’s portfolio, there were three observation checklists filled by teacher mentor and supervisor and two reflections at the disposal. Both reflections

were rather descriptive and shallow in reflection, neither with any deeper contemplation nor with any reference to theory.

For illustration see the following paraphrasing of a part the overall reflection on the practice: The atmosphere at school was very positive and the teaching practice was a good experience. Before the practice Sandra expected that it would be more challenging to manage discipline than it finally was. She was surprised, that pupils were nice and cooperating and that it was quite easy to maintain discipline. Her teacher mentor was positive about Sandra's teaching and suggested improvement in writing on the blackboard. Sandra also experienced cooperation with assistant of a pupil with Asperger's syndrome that was very precious experience. During her first teaching practice she found out that the teacher's work is very hectic and tiring. She finds it very difficult to stay focused all the time, even though she was told that it is only matter of time. Sandra also had problems with voice since she felt that her vocal folds were overstrained.

Sandra's reflection on one particular lesson describes chronically what happened in the classroom commenting briefly on various aspects. There were for example two disruptive girls but Sandra did not want to resear them because she does not like reseating pupils. Other seating arrangement could bring some benefits but she prefers the traditional one anyway. Pupils were actively participating in the activities. The lesson was well structured, balanced and highly communicative.

In the portfolio there were also two observation checklists filled by teacher mentors. The first teacher evaluated all areas with the highest mark (6), the other teacher used 6 or 5, with one exception, i.e. the use of the blackboard which was 4. Both teacher mentors evaluated Sandra's reflective skill with the highest mark.

Another notice worth mentioning is the supervisor's criticism of Sandra's English. In the interview Sandra admitted that it ruined her good feeling from practice. According to the checklist the supervisor gave Sandra 4 (out of 5) while both teacher mentors evaluated Sandra's English with 6.

#### **3.6.4.1 Overall interpretation of Sandra's reflective skills and influence on them based on all accessible data**

According to the processed data it seems that in Sandra's case any systematic and deeper reflection took place only with the teacher mentor. The questions of the teacher mentor have features of such reflecting: "What could have been done

differently?”, “What were the limiting factors?”, “What could be changed for the next time?” and “What are the deficiencies and why?”.

In contrast to the reflective nature of these questions, the written reflection appears to be rather shallow and implicates that Sandra was not aware how to write a proper reflection. The reflection concerns rather technical aspects as for example use of the blackboard, filling in the register. Even though Sandra names positive things as well as deficiencies in her teaching, there is neither any deeper contemplation nor reference to any academic literature.

According to the available data, the feedback from supervisor and the leading methodologist did not induce any need for deeper reflection, which might also be one of the reasons of the quality of the written reflection.

### **3.6.5 Peter**

- second semester student

There were three lesson plans with reflections at the disposal. All of them describe the progress of the lesson emphasising reflection in action. As emerged from the reflections Peter does not strictly stick to the lesson plan when he discovers a new potential of an activity and is not reluctant to spontaneously modify the lesson plan. However, he always gives reasons for such modifications referring to pupils’ needs and benefits. For example, pupils got enthusiastic and came up with further questions that resulted into an extra language input. These reflections are also highly concerned about fulfilment of the learning aims. To ensure that all pupils (even the least advanced ones) learn what they should Peter constantly checks their understanding.

Despite the strong focus on pupils learning the reflections do not offer any possible improvements or alternative solutions. When comparing with the ALACT model the reflection seems to be stuck between the second and the third level. He realizes essential aspects of the situation but does not refer to any theory. However, the reflections focus on accurate analysis of individual problems, which probably offers the solutions and improvements but only implicitly.

He found the analysis with the leading methodologist as a positive experience. They discussed various practical problems which Peter found beneficial.



### **3.6.5.1 Overall interpretation of Peter's reflective skills and influence on them based on all accessible data**

The above-mentioned reflections support Peter's attitude shared in the interview. He puts focus on pupils' learning and likes to rely on intuition during his teaching. His emphasis on use of practical language was apparent from both the interview and the reflections. On contrary, in the interview Peter said he wanted to be stricter to pupils, which did not appear in his reflections. His reflection concerns accurate description of concrete situations focusing on their essential aspects, which is an indicator of good reflection, however the reflective cycle is not completed, yet.

## **4 Research conclusion**

The research aimed to explore reflective skills of trainee teachers and the influence of the teaching practice on them. Three different methods (observation, interview and analysis of materials) were used to gather necessary data, which were subsequently processed and interpreted.

The main research question was set as:

**What is the contribution of experience from teaching practice for the development of reflective skills of trainee teachers?**

All of the trainees found the teaching practice useful. It showed them their strengths (well structured and enjoyable lessons, positive relationships with pupils, careful lesson planning, time-management, etc.) as well as room for improvement (discipline, authority, work with young learners or with pupils with special learning needs, spelling, etc.). The reflective dialogues with mentors manifested their influence on the systematic reflection of trainees. Also lesson analyses with supervisors were beneficial for reflection but only approximately in half the cases. In contrast the consultations with leading methodologists turned out to be helpful for the most trainees. However, it seems from the data that after the teaching practice all trainees more or less see the sense of reflection.

The main research question was further divided into more specific questions:

### **1. What topics are the subjects of reflection?**

From the analysis with supervisor it emerged that the most concerned topics of reflection are time-management, lesson aims, class-management, instructions, language and accuracy (of both trainee teachers and pupils), learning environment and alternative solutions. The interviews showed that most of the trainees are concerned about finding a balance between positive relationships with pupils (a positive learning environment) and maintaining authority.

## **2. To what depth and how often do trainee teachers reflect? What methods do they use in the reflection process?**

The depth of the reflection was different among the respondents. Some of them showed indications of good reflection (describing concrete situations, asking reflective questions, going through the whole reflective cycle) while others showed indications of rather shallow reflection (general description, no reflective questions). Some of the trainees finished the whole reflective cycle while others remained in different phases of the process, which made their reflection to be rather descriptive. Most of the trainee teachers reflected also within the levels of core reflection according to Korthagen's model.

Three of the trainees reflected systematically. One of them was even actively looking for different methods of reflection, while the other two based their reflection primarily on analyses with their mentors. Those remaining two trainees, whose mentors' support was weak regarding reflection, reflected rather randomly than systematically.

The most common methods of reflection were thinking about the lesson, discussions with the teacher mentor, feedback from pupils, and lesson observation.

## **3. How do students perceive support from their university supervisors and teacher mentors?**

Both fourth semester students felt that they did not get appropriate feedback from their supervisors. One of them did not have any consultation with the leading methodologists at all and the other trainee had only one during the first practice. All of the second semester students got satisfying feedback from their supervisor except for one trainee who found the feedback useless. Some of the analyses with supervisors were rather shallow in reflection. However, the research did not show that non-methodologists would give worse feedback, but it underlined the necessity

of systematic methodological support of these supervisors. All trainees who had the consultation with their leading methodologists evaluated it positively and found it also beneficial, except in one case where the trainee felt overloaded with exams and paperwork.

Some ideas for possible improvements regarding the teaching practice addressed mainly the sequence or proportion of courses at the university. Some trainees expressed the wish to have more practical oriented subjects. Another suggestion had to do with more lessons during the practice. Some trainees pointed out a lack of preparation for working with pupils of different levels or with special learning needs.

## **5 Discussion**

Reflection is a very complex phenomenon and its very difficult to set criteria to measure it. Not many attempts have been made to operationalize reflection and many of these attempts failed. (Korthagen 69) Different authors have different opinions about the definition of reflection and this uncertainty makes it difficult for researchers to objectively evaluate someone's level of reflection. Therefore this thesis tried rather to describe it than to evaluate it.

The research findings cannot be generalized because of the small sample chosen within the qualitative approach. However, these findings still have great information value since the qualitative research enables the discovery of such findings that the quantitative cannot. Generally in education research the qualitative approach has become more popular with greater emphasis on the top-down approach in teaching.

The findings could have been more complex if more focus had been put on the analysis of the teaching portfolios. After analysis of one of the portfolios it turned out to be a very rich source of information about the trainee's reflection. However, it was not possible to gather the whole portfolios from all participants and only some parts were accessible. It would have been also beneficial to observe consultations with the leading methodologists.

This research might bring great insight into how student English teachers use reflection and what motivates them to use it. These findings can be useful for the trainee teachers themselves as well as for the university employees as methodologists, supervisors, mentors and other specialists. The findings might give rise to further research in the area of the development of reflective skills during teaching practice.

## 6 Conclusion

This thesis introduced the theoretical base for the concept of reflection and emphasized its importance in teacher education. It explained the notion of the reflective practitioner and named characteristics of reflective teachers and indicators of quality reflection. Concrete models, methods, various questions, and teachers' standards were presented as a suggestion of guidance for trainees to learn how to reflect. One chapter also elaborated on the specific phenomena of teachers' profession and possible difficulties of trainees that they should be aware of.

The empirical part aimed to explore the reflection of trainees during their teaching practice. Regarding the nature of the purpose of the research the qualitative approach was chosen. There were three different methods used to collect data: observation, interview, and analyses of material. The findings that emerged from analyses of these data showed that all trainees found the teaching practice useful and that it helped them realize their strengths and where they needed room for improvement. Further, it emerged that some trainees reflected more deeply, describing concrete situations, asking reflective questions, going through the whole reflective cycle while others rather shallowly, using general description and not completing the reflective cycle.

The fact as to whether the teacher mentor leads reflective dialogue with the trainee or does not turned out to be a very important source of motivation for trainees to reflect systematically. Trainees whose mentors did not carry on such dialogues reflected rather randomly. While the contribution of supervisors' feedback was questioned in half of the cases, the discussions with methodologists were evaluated positively in this matter by most of the trainees. The findings further list the most common topics of reflection and name methods that trainees used for their reflection.

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## 8 Appendices

### Interview No. 1

- **Daniela**, second semester masters' study student
- observed by a non-methodologist

INTERVIEWER: **How did you like the teaching practice?**

INTERVIEWEE: I liked it. We were at a school with extensive language teaching, so the children have been learning English since the first grade so in the second grade they already know quite a lot. We had a great and very supportive teacher mentor. When we needed anything, to ask for advice, she was always forthcoming and very helpful. So the conditions for the teaching practice were excellent.

INTERVIEWER: **If you had to say what teaching practice gave you, what would it be?**

INTERVIEWEE: I discovered other new professional fields which I personally need to focus on, what to be careful about, what to improve. I became more confident about my teaching, that I am able to manage a lesson, so that it will be fun and communicative. On the other hand I have also discovered some areas that I still need to work on.

INTERVIEWER: **What did your reflection look like? Did you reflect after every lesson?**

INTERVIEWEE: I reflected on every lesson, I always wrote down some points and then at the end of the day I thought it through. I reflected on what happened according to my lesson plans and wrote down what I could do differently and then I put the final touches on it for the teaching portfolio.

INTERVIEWER: **Did you reflect also with someone else?**

INTERVIEWEE: First, with my teacher mentor, always after school. When there was something urgent, like something turned out very well or badly, we exchanged few ideas immediately. One time we stayed there for an hour, but usually it took 20 minutes. Further, there was my classmate from the university, with whom I discussed more or less what came to mind. We also exchanged feedback via the Internet, when something occurred to us. We also observed each other a lot, we were taking turns, so every time when one of us had free time before lessons, she went to



observe the other one. Then I got feedback from the supervisor from the English department who observed my lesson.

**INTERVIEWER: What issues were the most common in the reflection?**

INTERVIEWEE: We talked a lot about group work, because in one class there was a problem that the children were not used to it, and the teacher mentor had been teaching them for the first year, so they were still getting used to working in groups. Then we talked about discipline, because it is an area where I have space for improvement.

**INTERVIEWER: What about lesson planning?**

INTERVIEWEE: We made long term plans – always at the end of the week. There were two students, and in one class we took turns, so we had to plan it in advance. I did my lesson planning predominantly by myself, while I got some recommendations from my teacher mentor about what to do from the textbook, but I had free hand.

**INTERVIEWER: I have a picture here. When you look at it, in what levels do you think you reflected the most?**

INTERVIEWEE: it is food for thought...

**INTERVIEWER: So when you reflected on a lesson, did you reflect mostly on what happened in the classroom?**

INTERVIEWEE: I started there. I always have a description of what was happening in the classroom.

**INTERVIEWER: Did you reflect on your behaviour somehow?**

INTERVIEWEE: Definitely, once there was a technical problem so I couldn't use the presentation that I had prepared. I had to improvise the whole lesson, however, when I was reflecting on it I found out that I managed it quite well and that it could have been worse.

**INTERVIEWER: Did you reflect on your competencies?**

INTERVIEWEE: Actually, I reflected on that in the final questionnaire of professional qualities. I definitely need to work on managing discipline. On the other hand my strengths are well-structured lessons, harmony in organizational forms, so that pupils train all skills - speaking, reading, writing, just everything.

**INTERVIEWER: Did you reflect on your beliefs? Such beliefs that might be reflected in your teaching?**

INTERVIEWEE: One at least. There was the moment when I went to the classroom, there were 15 children and majority of them were boys, who are at the age of 11, and just wild, so I went there with the expectation that they will be a little wild and this expectation lowered my enthusiasm. Then I also reflected on that. Such expectations mustn't influence me, because then it gets transmitted to the children, too.

INTERVIEWER: **Now we come to identity and mission, these are the deepest levels of reflection; do you think that you reflected within these levels, as well?**

INTERVIEWEE: Professional identity. In the final evaluation, my teacher mentor mentioned that I'm nice and friendly. On one hand it is good to be friendly, because it creates a positive learning environment and then the pupils are friendly, too. On the other hand there must be boundaries, too, because it happened to me that those wild boys dared bit more than they should. My teacher mentor told me that she would correct them much earlier than I had. As a result of this, I also want to focus on discipline in the future, to be friendly, but only to a certain extent.

INTERVIEWER: **What about your mission? What do you want your pupils to learn?**

INTERVIEWEE: First of all, to like the language. We discussed this with my teacher mentor, who has been teaching there for a year, so when she came there she heard from pupils, that English is terrible and that they don't like it. She told me that she is trying to make language learning more enjoyable for them and I identify myself with this opinion. I think that a positive attitude is essential. I want to develop their skills, I want them to be able to communicate, but also I want them to like the language, because if they don't like it, they won't learn anything.

INTERVIEWER: **I have few questions concerning teacher mentors and supervisors. How would you evaluate your teacher mentor? As I understood it would be positive.**

INTERVIEWEE : very positive

INTERVIEWER: **What was the structure of analysis with your teacher mentor like?**

INTERVIEWEE: The structure probably followed the lesson plan. She was sitting there and writing notes from top to bottom.

INTERVIEWER: **How would you describe the analysis with the supervisor? I was there, but I mean from your point of view.**

INTERVIEWEE: We started with general issues such as lesson aims and continued to the individual points.

INTERVIEWER: **What did the analysis give you?**

INTERVIEWEE: I was pleased and motivated. I got very positive feedback. I think that in comparison with my other classmates, I received high-quality feedback. Most of my classmates were not so lucky to get a half an hour of analysis.

INTERVIEWER: **Do you have any information from your classmates about the analyses with their supervisors?**

INTERVIEWEE: It would be gossiping. I got it all vicariously so I would not like to create some misconceptions, but I do not think there are a lot of supervisors who would analyse the lesson for a half an hour, of course there are some, I know that some people had very long discussions. So I was very satisfied with my supervisor

INTERVIEWER: **What do you think that the feedback from the classmates gave you?**

INTERVIEWEE: Another kind of food for thought. For example, when I observed my classmate, I noticed lot of things that I would not notice in my own teaching, so I expected that the same kind of feedback came also from her. She noticed a lot of things that I didn't realize, for example what type of parasitic words I was using or what she thought about individual activities.

INTERVIEWER: **After the practice, what would you praise yourself for?**

INTERVIEWEE: I don't praise myself much, but based on feedback from the children I would praise myself for creating a positive learning environment. Pupils had the feeling that they weren't learning; they were having fun and enjoyed the activities. The idea of "we have a lesson" disappeared from their heads and they enjoyed it. One girl was also pleased that I remembered their names after the first lesson, which is quite crucial at that age (second grade) when they are building their identities. So I would praise myself for the fact that I have managed to establish a positive relationship with pupils, even though I only taught them for a short period.

INTERVIEWER: **So you got some feedback from your pupils. What did you learn from that feedback?**

INTERVIEWEE: During the last 5 minutes of the last lesson my classmate and I asked them for some feedback. It was very helpful. One thing is how I evaluate myself as a teacher, how someone who observes me evaluates and how those involved evaluate it, each one is very different. Sometimes I might think the activity

is fun, but children might not find it enjoyable. So when they named individual activities that they remembered and enjoyed them, it was definitely very beneficial.

INTERVIEWER: **And what would you like to improve?**

INTERVIEWEE: I would like to improve discipline and to avoid a variety of possible influences on my teaching. For example the last few days I was sick, so I would like to ignore that, or the expectation that the boys will misbehave – I would like to ignore that. Not to let this affect my teaching, enter the classroom with enthusiasm “*now I'm here and I'm here for you*”.

INTERVIEWER: **Do you think that you were well prepared from the university for the teaching practice?**

INTERVIEWEE: For me it's hard to say, because I have previous teaching experience and experience from my other studies. I think that own teaching experience is the best preparation, so let's say; I was partially prepared from university.

INTERVIEWER: **Did you use the knowledge you gained here at the department of education, were you able to apply it?**

INTERVIEWEE: I hope so. Everything you learn here influences you, so I hope that I somehow can transfer it to other people.

INTERVIEWER: **Would you have any suggestions on what could be improved?**

INTERVIEWEE: I think that reflection and feedback is very important. There are 12 lessons we teach, and one observation by supervisor from the department, so this should have some quality. I got really good feedback and I'm very grateful for that, but I was rather an exception. There are non-methodologists, who come for the observation, so it must be difficult for them to give us constructive feedback that would be useful for us. I believe that if I was observing a doctor and supposed to give him/her feedback - I'm not an expert - so I couldn't give him/her adequate feedback. I do not mean that there should be only methodologists, who observe, but they should be somehow prepared, such as a list of what they should focus on and then what they should discuss with us.

INTERVIEWER: **What about the questionnaire of professional qualities? Was it helpful?**

INTERVIEWEE: It is good for me to see whether or not I have gone into all important areas. On the one hand, it is difficult to assess myself, because for each of us “eight” means something different. I had the opportunity to consult it with my

classmate. We read each other's evaluations and said "I think you overvalued or undervalued yourself in this aspect".

## **Interview No. 2**

- **Robert**, second semester student
- Observed by methodologist

INTERVIEWER: **How did you like the teaching practice?**

INTERVIEWEE: I would say yes, I did. Within the bounds of possibility.

INTERVIEWER: **What did the teaching practice give you?**

INTERVIEWEE: New kind of experience. Lets say quite a valuable experience.

INTERVIEWER: **For example?**

INTERVIEWEE: Working with a group of people, which is something I did not learn at university. Working in the field.

INTERVIEWER: **What was your reflection process like?**

INTERVIEWEE: After every lesson with my teacher mentor. It took usually 10 min.

INTERVIEWER: **What did you learn from that feedback?**

INTERVIEWEE: I would say that my teacher mentor was very good and gave me good quality feedback, which included everything that it should. Some looking back on the lesson, reflecting on the lesson, places for improvement. My teacher mentor knew how to give feedback very well.

INTERVIEWER: **How would you describe the analysis with your teacher mentor?**

INTERVIEWEE: She was sitting there during my lessons and writing the whole time. She wrote down the lesson structure and many different notes. Immediately after the lesson she told me what she liked, what she did not like and what I should improve. She usually gave me a task for the next time, what I should focus on in the next lesson, so that I would get better. She even evaluated me in this matter positively that I am able to apply her comments in the following lesson. I think that you heard it yourself during the analysis with the supervisor.

INTERVIEWER: **On what topics did you reflect the most?**

INTERVIEWEE With my teacher mentor we talked primarily about the subject matter. We discussed what I did, how I did it, what interaction in the classroom I used, also methods.

INTERVIEWER: **What about class-management and discipline?**

INTERVIEWEE: I did not have problems with class-management, so I did not reflect on that. My teacher mentor said that I was doing well in this aspect.

INTERVIEWER: **What about lesson planning?**

INTERVIEWEE: Yes, we consulted each lesson plan. Sometimes I changed something at the last minute. After all, my teacher mentor has more experience.

INTERVIEWER: **Did you also reflect on giving instructions?**

INTERVIEWEE: Sometimes when there was a problem, but rarely.

INTERVIEWER: **What about lesson aims? Your supervisor pointed out that you did not announce them.**

INTERVIEWEE: I set the aims of the lesson and also wrote them on paper but then I forgot to announce them. This also happened to me during the observation in my second field practice, even though my both teacher mentors stressed that I should do it.

INTERVIEWER: **How important do you find the announcement of the aims?**

INTERVIEWEE: It is probably important. I grew up with a different teaching approach and no one told us about lesson aims. Maybe my own learning experience tells me that the pupil should get involved in the lesson and find his/her own meaning of the lesson. But I'm not saying that this approach is right, just that I am used to what I experienced as learner myself.

INTERVIEWER: **What would you praise yourself for during the teaching practice?**

INTERVIEWEE: What would I praise myself for? I have not thought about it. I liked that the pupils really enjoyed several of my lessons. I think that it is important that pupils enjoy lessons. There must be some work done, of course, but I think it is also important that they like going to school. It is important especially in foreign language learning. Moreover when we have a modern school, not some 19th-century one.

INTERVIEWER: **How did you make sure that your lessons are fun?**

INTERVIEWEE: I tried to choose interesting stuff, that is what makes the lesson interesting. I also tried to get everyone involved. Some people, and I used to be the same as learner, were rather quiet in the classroom. I think I was successful in getting them involved in the activities. Better to say I tried hard and I was not

always successful but I was trying that everyone at least says something in the lesson.

INTERVIEWER: **What was the atmosphere in the classroom?**

INTERVIEWEE: It depends on the class. I had different classes; in two of them the atmosphere was quite good. With the class from first grade it was worse and I think they apparently did not have much fun. I could feel it myself that it was not ideal.

INTERVIEWER: **Why do you think they did not have fun?**

INTERVIEWEE: It seemed to me that I am not good at working with young kids. In terms of what I taught them, they probably learned it. I'm not fond of games but we played some a couple of times. Anyway, I must say that I was weaker in this class because of my personality.

INTERVIEWER: **This might be related to the next question. What would you like to improve?**

INTERVIEWEE: Working with young children. However, I doubt that I will ever work with such small children.

INTERVIEWER: **Would you say that you lack some sort of preparation for teaching students of different ages?**

INTERVIEWEE: That is a good question. I was probably not prepared for that. I think it is very subjective issue. Generally, I think that at university we are trained mainly theoretically, but not to work in the field, everyone has to learn it themselves during the teaching practice.

INTERVIEWER: **When we talk about the theory, when you have a look at this picture of levels of reflection, on what levels did you reflect?**

INTERVIEWEE: I certainly reflected on the mission. If what I'm doing makes sense, if pupils learn something. Certainly on the level of competence, if I manage what I should manage as teacher. Also on level of behaviour - if I use the appropriate methods, appropriate repertoire of tools and if I used them correctly. The most important thing for me was the benefit of my lessons for the pupils.

INTERVIEWER: **Did you also reflect on some beliefs? About pupils for example?**

INTERVIEWEE: I probably did not reflect on any belief. I had some beliefs but I did not have any need to reflect on them. These beliefs might have been reflected in my behaviour.

**INTERVIEWER: What other methods did you use to reflect? You have mentioned conversation with your teacher mentor.**

INTERVIEWEE: We wrote tests from what I taught them, so I checked what they learnt. My teacher mentor recommended it to me, so that I can see what I managed to teach them and where I have weak points.

**INTERVIEWER: What did you learn from the test?**

INTERVIEWEE: I could exactly trace the problem. I made a connection between their mistakes and the teaching methods that I chose for that specific phenomena. I found out that the methods were not ideal. This was mainly in the beginning of my teaching practice. What I taught them later also turned out better in the test. Logically, this corresponds to my development.

**INTERVIEWER: Did you use any other methods to reflect?**

INTERVIEWEE: I discussed it few times with my classmate but not very significantly. I reflected especially with the help of my teacher mentor and then also by myself. I thought it through, which was the main method of reflection. I played the lesson in my head again, together with what my teacher mentor told me. I was focused on what I could improve. And the test was really great feedback.

**INTERVIEWER: Did you write down some notes?**

INTERVIEWEE: Rarely.

**INTERVIEWER: How would you rate your teacher mentor?**

INTERVIEWEE: She was excellent; I got exactly what I expected, actually even more than that.

**INTERVIEWER: What was the interview with your supervisor like? I mean from your point of view?**

INTERVIEWEE: You have your own information because you were there. Anyway, my subjective view was that it was surprisingly very professional. The teacher said I positively surprised him, so he also pleasantly surprised me. The analysis contained everything that I expected. It was brief but concise. Moreover he observed only one lesson. If he had seen more, he could say more.

**INTERVIEWER: What did you learn from this feedback?**

INTERVIEWEE: Mainly information about my supervisor, I have to say it was positive experience.

**INTERVIEWER: And for your teaching?**



INTERVIEWEE: Honestly, not so much but it is understandable because it was only one lesson. It was my last lesson, the completion of my teaching practice. The main contribution of the supervisor's feedback was sort of confirmation that what I am doing is not that bad, and that I am on good way.

INTERVIEWER: **So you would say you felt support from him.**

INTERVIEWEE: Yes, definitely.

INTERVIEWER: **Do you think that you were prepared well for practice from the university?**

INTERVIEWEE: I think that I was prepared pretty well - theoretically. Practically probably not but I am working on it. I cannot learn anything from practice at the university; I can learn it only in the practice. I personally would like to have more practice but that would mean fewer courses at the university and we would not learn anything at the university. The question is what is better. It would be nice to find some balance, half and half. But honestly, I do not see much into this issue. However even this one month was definitely helpful.

INTERVIEWER: **Concerning teaching practice what else could be improved at our university?**

INTERVIEWEE: I would prefer less paperwork. It is useless. They could take an example from the department of my second major, whose style is "just go and try it". They will put more focus later during the second teaching practice.

INTERVIEWER: **What about the questionnaire of professional qualities of a teacher? Did it help you to reflect?**

INTERVIEWEE: I just filled it in. I did not use it for reflection. It gave me some structure, what to focus on. Perhaps it would be good if I had a look at it before practice, which was not my case.

### **Interview No. 3**

- Radka, a fourth semester student. She has already experienced two teaching practices, which means two mentors and two supervisors.
- Observed by non-methodologists

INTERVIEWER: **How did you like teaching practice?**

INTERVIEWEE: I liked it.

INTERVIEWER: **What did the practice give you?**

INTERVIEWEE: Enthusiasm to teach. It gave me motivation, even though I am aware of the fact that we are sent to schools where the situation does not correspond to the common elementary schools. I was at school with extended language lessons, so the children had a different level.

INTERVIEWER: **And in addition to motivation?**

INTERVIEWEE: Confidence. That I am able to stand in front of the whole class.

INTERVIEWER: **This thesis is concerned about reflection. How would you describe your reflection?**

INTERVIEWEE: Basically there was no reflection. After each lesson I taught there was a ten-minute break so I had neither time nor need to reflect on it. However, I never had any tragic feelings after a lesson. Everything went mostly according to my plan so after each lesson I always began to prepare for the next one. I just did not want to reflect, I focused rather on preparing for the next lesson.

INTERVIEWER: **So you did not have the need to reflect?**

INTERVIEWEE: When I had the need, I stayed with my teacher mentor for a while after the lessons, at the end of the day. I asked her but this was usually initiated from my side. She would not come and comment on my lessons. If I had not asked, I would have never got any feedback.

INTERVIEWER: **So you did not have any systematic reflection with your teacher mentor and when, it was only initiated from your side.**

INTERVIEWEE: Exactly.

INTERVIEWER: **You said that when you had some problem and wanted to reflect on it. How often did that happen?**

INTERVIEWEE: I guess twice during the teaching practice.

INTERVIEWER: **And what was this analysis with your teacher mentor like?**

INTERVIEWEE: I must say that this applies only to the first teaching practice. During the high school teaching practice there was no analysis at all. So the analysis during the first practice looked like the following: My teacher mentor was present in all lessons, but I think that she was doing her own stuff, and sometimes she wrote down what she found interesting, whether in positive or negative way. When I asked her about feedback she was very nice and friendly, she said, yes, I agree with you, this was not good, I would have done it this way. I usually had parallel classes, so I could try to use the better approach in the next lesson.

INTERVIEWER: **What did you learn from this feedback?**

INTERVIEWEE: I was aware of most of the things she told me myself, so I guess this rather reinforced my view of that lesson, sometimes it brought something new to me, but I do not remember specifically. We discussed only minor problems like whether I should play the recording again. I had no big problems.

INTERVIEWER: **On what did you reflect the most?**

INTERVIEWEE: I was thinking about the procedures, in what sequence I should go on with the activities. There was listening for example and I played the recording only once because I had the feeling that they were ready so I continued with the next activity but then I realized that it was wrong. I should have asked whether someone needed to listen to it again.

INTERVIEWER: **What about discipline?**

INTERVIEWEE: I did not have problems with discipline.

INTERVIEWER: **What about lesson planning?**

INTERVIEWEE: Honestly, I made all my plans myself and did not consult with anyone about them. I consulted with my mentor about the initial lesson plans, but honestly she did not care about them. She agreed to the plan and then she let me do the lesson planning freely.

INTERVIEWER: **What about time- management? How did you manage it?**

INTERVIEWEE: Oddly enough, yes, I did. I was actually surprised. It never happened to me that we would not have anything to do. I had always prepared rather more activities than less, and those classes were usually so amazing and wonderful that everything worked out.

INTERVIEWER: **What about lesson aims? Did you reflect on them?**

INTERVIEWEE: I had quite a problem with lesson aims. I found it difficult to formulate them. In our courses at university we were told that we should be using

“students can do something” and my aim was “to teach students something”. So I actually formulated the aims from my point of view. To be honest I probably did not set aims for each lesson. Example given, when I had teaching practice at high school, I taught modal verbs in the sense of probability, so I knew that for the 3-4 hours the pupils will know - or should know – how to use these verbs. It is not possible to learn it in one lesson.

**INTERVIEWER: Did you reflect on meeting those aims?**

INTERVIEWEE: Yes, but more for myself than by any official means.

**INTERVIEWER: Did you get some feedback from your students?**

INTERVIEWEE: Yes, the modal verbs were quite difficult for them, so they asked me a lot and it was also very nice for me to see that they were interested to learn it, or at least it seemed they were. They had lot of questions even in the second lesson, so I decided to prepare a table with all the modal verbs so that they have it all on one paper well arranged. And what was interesting is that in the second parallel class, I got pretty negative feedback that they do not need to learn it again that they had done it already a long time ago. So in this class I replaced the table by more exercises and activities for practicing to make sure that they really know how to use it, than they only thinks they can.

**INTERVIEWER: What would you praise yourself for?**

INTERVIEWEE: For the preparation for the lesson. I spent too much time with that. I cared that each lesson was interesting and that in lesson contained an activity that the students will enjoy instead of the boring routine: “open your textbook.” I must say that preparation for each lesson took me approximately an hour. I spent lot of time on it and I would praise myself for that.

**INTERVIEWER: What would you like to improve?**

INTERVIEWEE: Maybe the same. I put so much effort into the preparation that I had spent so much time on it. I think that in the future it will certainly be impossible, so I would like to learn how to prepare lesson of the same quality but faster. I think that it comes with practice that the teacher develops a repertoire of activities that he/she can use.

**INTERVIEWER: What methods did you use for reflection?**

INTERVIEWEE: hmm ...

**INTERVIEWER: You said you asked your teacher mentor for advice. Did you talk to your classmate?**

INTERVIEWEE: I was always alone at the practice. We might have shared some experience with classmates at university, but I would probably not include that into reflection.

INTERVIEWER: **Did you think a lesson over?**

INTERVIEWEE: Certainly, I based my preparation for the next lesson on that. I was preparing from day to day, so I knew what works with the class, what is fast and what takes them longer, for what I should give more time, for what they will need less time

INTERVIEWER: **How did you work with these observations?**

INTERVIEWEE: I wrote them into the lesson plan. For example, I wrote that we did not manage to do that activity and we should do it in the next lesson or that this activity was problematic for pupils. So I marked these in the lesson plan somehow so that when I come home and have a look at it I know what is needed.

INTERVIEWER: **Look at this picture, on what levels would you say you reflected?**

INTERVIEWEE: Certainly on those first levels, it is clear. I did not face many problems so I did not have to go into some deeper levels. Maybe I reflected on beliefs. It happened that I changed my opinion about some pupils during the practice. Even though I try to avoid pigeon-holing, it is very difficult. So for example at the beginning it seemed to me that the student is disinterested in what we were doing but then I found out that he is probably shy, that he is afraid to talk in front of other pupils.

INTERVIEWER: **What about your professional identity?**

INTERVIEWEE: Well, I was surprised because I thought that I would not be sufficiently authoritative for the pupils. Not because of me, but because of the role of a trainee. I thought this role would put me in a such position, but I have to say that it did not come true. It surprised me that the pupils considered me to be on the same level as their teacher, at least as it seemed to me outwardly. And it was also interesting that when I let the pupils write some reviews of my person, I let their teacher set this so that they do not feel obliged to write positive things.. The majority was satisfied, but a lot of people added: “but I still like our teacher more.” So they stayed faithful to her. This happened in the second grade. On the contrary, when I was at high school, the teacher was already retired and could not meet needs of older students, I do not mean linguistically, but rather from the point of view of

thinking, so they probably felt closer to me. So they expressed their wish to have someone younger.

**INTERVIEWER: What did you learn from the feedback from your pupils?**

INTERVIEWEE: It was helpful, but even though I told the teacher what I would like to include into the feedback, and she probably also told the pupils, they did not keep those criteria. The most of them wrote things like “I liked it”, “I did not like it”. They wrote such things that have no great value. What really surprised me was that at the high school one half of the pupils wrote that they did not like my pronunciation and the other half wrote that they found my pronunciation great. I was really confused. I did the modal verbs with them, as we have discussed earlier. There were two parallel classes and the one where they were showing off that they already know everything, so these students did not like my pronunciation. On contrast the second class, where they asked a lot, they wrote that they liked my pronunciation. It seemed to me that they did it just to spite me. They were not satisfied and were looking for something they could criticize.

**INTERVIEWER: Do you think it is possible that you modified your pronunciation in different groups?**

INTERVIEWEE: Not at all. I am sure that my pronunciation is always the same. It is interesting that in the classroom, where they criticized me, they all wrote it on one sheet of paper so everyone could see what the others wrote before, so there might have been one initiator, who wrote “I do not like the pronunciation” and the others copied it. I do not think that I would have such horrible pronunciation.

**INTERVIEWER: Something else from this feedback?**

INTERVIEWEE: They wrote that I was so nice. I think I am nice but maybe sometimes too much. So I should try to be stricter, but still in some limits. I would like to set it right from the beginning. I tend to be very friendly in the beginning and then correct it, which should be exactly the opposite.

**INTERVIEWER: We have discussed the methods. Now how would you rate your teacher mentor?**

INTERVIEWEE: I would evaluate both of my teacher mentors positively. With the first teacher we liked each other's personalities. She was very friendly, she was asking if I have any problems. However, I prefer to rely on myself than on others, and when I had a problem I felt I would bother her, but I knew that I could come to her for help. She was willing to be there with me before and after school. She came

earlier when I needed to learn how to work with the interactive whiteboard or how to treat different teaching aids. She stayed longer to tell me that I was doing this and that. The second teacher mentor was working only part-time, so I could see the work has become routine for her. She was willing to help me, but I felt that the feedback was not as good as with the first one. However, we are still talking on the level that there was rather no feedback than a proper feedback.

**INTERVIEWER: How would you describe the analysis with the other teacher mentor?**

INTERVIEWEE: Pretty much the same but I had to overtly ask her what she thought about the lesson. If I had not asked, I would not have found out anything. However, when I asked her she said: “ It was good, I liked it. You are good”. She just praised me, which is definitely nice to listen to, but not very helpful. I think that I am probably not that great in teaching when I come into a class of 15 students for the first time, even though I have some teaching experience.

**INTERVIEWER: How would you rate the supervisor who came for the observation?**

INTERVIEWEE: Both teachers who came to my observation were not methodologists. In the first case I was directly told “I am not methodologist I can give you feedback only on what I personally remember from my studies”. I got some feedback, but my both observed lessons were actually already pre-tested in parallel classes, so I had chance to improve them. Therefore I think there was not much to criticize. I remember that first observer told me that there were lesson aims missing in my lesson plan. And the second observer, unfortunately did not have time for the feedback, so I was told that the lesson was good and that I will get some feedback later, which I never did. I actually did when I got back my portfolio. There was a sheet with evaluation from one to five, some fields were not filled at all, and there were not even any notes. I did not understand the evaluation so I did not learn anything from this feedback.

**INTERVIEWER: And after the practice did you have any consultation with the leading methodologist at university?**

INTERVIEWEE: Only after the first one, with the second one did not take place at all.

**INTERVIEWER: So what was the first one like?**

INTERVIEWER: Quite abundant. I went there twice, the first time we were talking about my portfolio, because I did not meet the requirements so I had to rewrite it. I was there for about a half an hour, but we did not talk about my practice, but rather about reflection itself. I did not know how to write it properly. The next time when I brought the rewritten reflection, we discussed how to implement it for the next time, how I should write it and on what I should base it. I must say that the debate was very theoretical.

INTERVIEWER: **What did you learn from this feedback?**

INTERVIEWEE: I know how to write a reflection, or I know it better than before but probably not perfectly. I know I should go deeper and rely more on theory.

INTERVIEWER: **Do you think you were well prepared for the teaching practice from the university?**

INTERVIEWEE: I would not say much from university because we had almost no methodological subjects before the practice, but due to the fact that I had worked for some time for a language school, I was not afraid of teaching. I knew I could make it. I felt ready but not thanks to the university. Although I must say that in the bachelor studies, we had a voluntary seminar, which gave me quite a lot. We did various activities and the lecturer gave us different pieces of advice, which inspired me a lot. On contrary I did not make any use of theoretical lectures.

INTERVIEWER: **What would have to change in teacher training that you would feel ready?**

INTERVIEWEE: I think if we had done the micro-teaching before the practice and not in the third semester it would probably help. It would also certainly help me if we had the course of pedagogical and psychological practice and reflection before the teaching practice. You get familiar with the school environment, whereas now you only learn about something you have already experienced. I see no sense in the current sequence of the courses. And I would probably do more practical activities in seminars and I first of all more reflection on the activities. Even though we did the micro-teaching after all, I did not find the feedback sufficient. In the beginning there was quite good feedback, but later with the semester the focus on feedback got weaker. The sense of the micro-teaching became rather like “I must survive the 10 minutes of teaching and then listen for two minutes this was good or this was bad”. I was one of the last ones doing the micro-teaching and the feedback I got was something like: “yes, it was good”.



INTERVIEWER: **Thank you. Would you like to add something to this topic?**

INTERVIEWEE: I think that even though we complain about the university preparation, it is very difficult to prepare us for something like that. We may try various things at university but the environment there is very different. I would say in certain aspects it is impossible to prepare us for teaching in the field. However, I might add more teaching practice. It seems unnecessary to me to observe 10 lessons, provided that we had done the same thing during the psychological and pedagogical practice. It happens that you have one class only two or three times, it seems very little to me. You are not able to establish any relationship with the pupils. Maybe I would make the practice longer but definitely I would add more lessons. So I think that it would be enough to observe one lesson in each class, which I will teach and then start teaching directly. I find it unnecessary to sit there for observation. I think it did not give me anything .

#### **Interview No. 4**

- **Sandra**, fourth semester student, talking mainly about her second teaching practice at high school
- Observed by non-methodologist and methodologist (mediation via video recording)

INTERVIEWER: **How did you like the teaching practice?**

INTERVIEWEE: I did. Even though I was not very enthusiastic in the beginning, I appreciated this experience in the end. I was very glad that I had arranged the teaching practice by myself in my home town. I talked to my classmates and not all of them were so enthusiastic after the practice as I was.

INTERVIEWER: **Why was that?**

INTERVIEWEE: They were in a stressful environment, their teacher mentors did not take care of them, and some of them also had troubles with their timetable.

INTERVIEWER: **What did the teaching practice give you?**

INTERVIEWEE: New experiences and motivation to teach at a school, however I would prefer to teach at a grammar school. The experience of real school life, the hustle and bustle, paper work, solving of individual problems of pupils, discussing troubles with colleagues. But at the same time there was a positive atmosphere and everybody was very nice to me and supportive. I was afraid of pupils at first but

then I saw it was a groundless fear, because we got on well, they were working very well I was told they liked me.

**INTERVIEWER: How did you reflect on your lessons?**

INTERVIEWEE: With my teacher mentor in the teachers' room after every lessons. When there was time, during the break, when there wasn't, at the end of the day. Even though sometimes only briefly.

**INTERVIEWER: What were the main topics of your reflection?**

INTERVIEWEE: Whether I managed to explain the subject matter, how students were working, what kind of interaction was taking place. What was good and what could be improved. We discussed whether I could have done some exercises in a different way and how I would do it and why I did not do it like that. What I would change if I could teach the same lesson again. Where I felt some deficiencies and why. We also discussed attitudes and behaviour of pupils. Another topic was my writing on the blackboard, which has always been a little problem for me. And we also consulted about the plan for the next lesson.

**INTERVIEWER: What would you praise yourself for?**

INTERVIEWEE: I think I was able to lead a lesson independently, without any big methodological errors. Pupils were working, and I think that my stay did not disturb the teacher's plan. I think I was even a welcome change for the pupils, who are used to a certain personality with one teacher.

**INTERVIEWER: What would you improve?**

INTERVIEWEE: I know that I definitely must learn to write systematically on the blackboard. Make it better structured and organized. I was even reproached for my friendliness to students. I was told I am too friendly, which worked well during my practice and pupils worked well, but my teacher mentor thought that after two months the atmosphere would get too free. Then I would have problems to maintain discipline by the end of the school year. Which is probably true.

**INTERVIEWER: If you look at this picture of levels of reflection in which areas did your reflection take place and with what frequency?**

INTERVIEWEE: The first three were discussed during every analysis with my teacher mentor, i.e. after every lesson. We also dealt with beliefs a few times when we were talking about individual pupils or when we characterized the classes that I was teaching. We consulted about what learning materials would be appropriate. There was also one student with Asperger's syndrome, so we discussed him a lot.

I think the reflection took place on all levels. The last two, identity and mission were mentioned only in the beginning and in the end of the practice. My teacher mentor asked me about my attitude to teaching. When I was leaving, she asked me if something changed in my attitude and whether I want to teach in the future and why.

**INTERVIEWER: What methods did you use to reflect?**

INTERVIEWEE: The most significant reflection was with my teacher mentor and I had also some feedback from the pupils.

**INTERVIEWER: How would you rate your teacher mentor?**

INTERVIEWEE: She was very friendly, helpful, kind, understanding but also critical in beneficial way. She was enthusiastic about her work. And according to what I observed during her lessons she had modern approach and using modern methods. She was also very effective.

**INTERVIEWER: How did the analysis with supervisor look like?**

INTERVIEWEE: I did not teach in Prague, so I had to record a video. The following analysis was very short. I was told that I had the situation in the classroom under control and the students were working.

**INTERVIEWER: What did you learn from this feedback?**

INTERVIEWEE: Well, I would say it did not ruin my good impression from the practice in contrast to the first teaching practice, after which I felt terrible. I was told I am terrible teacher and my English is terrible, too. Despite that I got excellent marks for that teaching practice.

**INTERVIEWER: Do you think you were well prepared for the practice from university? Alternatively, what would you change?**

INTERVIEWEE: I think I was ready thanks to my personal teaching experience. My teacher mentor even told me it is apparent that I have taught. I encountered problems with writing on the blackboard, filling in the electronic register and orientation in the school documents. I had not had experience with that from my private teaching. I also did not know how to work with an interactive board.

I knew how to write a lesson plan, how to structure a lesson, how to name individual steps, and how to formulate lesson aims. However, this is not manifested in the classroom, but rather in reflection.

**INTERVIEWER: Would you like to add something to this topic?**

INTERVIEWEE: What I consider as a big problem is the fact that nobody has ever mentioned how to work in a situation, when there is a pupil with an assistant in the class. Eventually, what is typical for such pupils. I really felt unprepared in this regard. Likewise, when working with register and interactive board.

#### **Interview No. 5.**

- **Peter**, second semester student

INTERVIEWER: **How did you like the teaching practice?**

INTERVIEWEE: I liked it. I realized that I really want to be a teacher. Before the practice I already had clear idea what is important to me as for an English teacher. Then I found out that some things are easy to apply while others are more difficult. For example 3 lessons per week are not enough. You cannot do enough practice with pupils, especially if you have weaker groups or pupils with various levels.

INTERVIEWER: **What was your reflection like?**

INTERVIEWEE: It took place on my way from the classroom to teachers' room in few minutes. I reflected on the lesson in my head. We have learnt at university that reflection should be based on theory, on some scientific literature. I personally think it is not necessary because you have some feeling from the lesson; you know what worked or did not. I naturally reflect on that, I sometimes recall some lesson later and think about it. However, I would certainly neither write any reflections nor thoughtfully discuss it with someone regularly.

INTERVIEWER: **So you would say your reflection is rather intuitive?**

INTERVIEWEE: Right, rather intuitive.

INTERVIEWER: **What topics did you reflect on?**

INTERVIEWEE: We got an observation sheet, which we accordingly had to observe a lesson. We did not understand if the reflection had to be focused only on what we were supposed to observe or if we should reflect also on the whole lesson generally. I am personally tired of dawdling over the scientific literature, so I just wrote what I liked or disliked.

INTERVIEWER: **So you reflected on someone else's lessons? Or on yours?**

INTERVIEWEE: Both, and both in the same way. When reflecting I proceeded with the lesson chronologically. I wrote about the problems that occurred, why they occurred and what I would do differently the next time. When observing someone else's lesson, I analysed the lesson according to my feelings and then I analysed it

from the focus of the observation sheet and supported that by some scientific literature.

INTERVIEWER: **So all of your written reflections should be theory-based?**

INTERVIEWEE: Yes. This approach has been implemented recently. I heard that the lecturers did not care about it before. I had one seminar in my bachelor studies, which was very practical. We did some micro-teaching and got very practical feedback. So when I was writing the reflection on the teaching practice I took inspiration in that course. However, as I have understood this approach might not be the proper one. The requirements of the leading methodologist of the practice are focused on theory. Nevertheless, if we had the other methodologist, whose approach is more intuitive, I personally think the requirements would be different.

INTERVIEWER: **Did you learn something from writing these reflections?**

INTERVIEWEE: I think we learnt more than we are able to admit. In the end it always gives you something. However, I think it is more fruitful if you use common sense when reflecting, because we already know some fact about English methodology so I find it useless to strictly quote some technical terms and examine whether I have complied with all stages according to that author. This is too much, but generally speaking reflection has sense. However, I would like to add that it is the problem of our entire class that we actually do not know what a proper reflection looks. We had the idea that reflection means to evaluate a lesson, what to improve and so on. Then we were told that it must be theory-based. So we brought some reflections but only one or two met qualities of reflection. So we asked few times what the proper reflection looks like and we did not get any answer, which would be comprehensible for us. So, I do not know.

INTERVIEWER: **What would you praise yourself for?**

INTERVIEWEE: I think that compared to other English teachers or trainees that I observed, I put emphasis rather on the practical language. This is also because of my work experience from England. So for example when other teachers encounter a new word with their pupils, they might have described it in English then pupils estimate what it meant and said it in Czech, then the teacher nodded and that was all. The fact that this word is used in a certain context, maybe in informal style, was neglected. So I really put emphasis on practical use of language and on pronunciation. It is a question whether it is so important or not, but to me the phonetic aspect of language is fun. I hate when teachers have bad pronunciation,

which is quite often. So I think I would praise myself for the fact that I try to give the pupils the most important thing what school should give them – speaking and practical language. Another positive thing about my teaching are good relationships with pupils.

**INTERVIEWER: What would you like to improve?**

**INTERVIEWEE:** I would like to improve spelling. I realized many times that I was not sure about spelling, even though I know a word for 10 years and I use it, all of a sudden when I stand there in front of pupils and need to write it on the blackboard I am not sure. Another thing, which I believe improves over time, is the fact that you must be stricter with these kids and not to empathise with them too much. This is difficult for me sometimes. So I would like to have authority in the sense that what I say counts. I am not their buddy and I should keep some professional distance. Therefore, I should not express such feelings, be fair and give them an F. For example I should not examine reasons why the pupil did not do the homework. However, I think that I have very good relationships with the children.

**INTERVIEWER: What about discipline?**

**INTERVIEWEE:** I did not have any problems. I only had 2 teenage girls, who were giggling or had bursts of laughter. I seated them separately, which helped, but on the other hand I absolutely understand. When I was their age I laughed like a madman, too.

**INTERVIEWER: What about lesson planning?**

**INTERVIEWEE:** I do not write any lesson plans. I make the plans in my head, which takes me approximately 10 min. The lesson aim is always clear to me but I do not announce it in front of pupils.

**INTERVIEWER: Why?**

**INTERVIEWEE:** I think if you have ideal class with pupils who adore you it might motivate them if you tell them “so today we are going to learn..” but if you have a real class I guess it is counter-productive, you would only make fool of yourself. Maybe if you tell them in some inconspicuous way, maybe to tell them some personal story so that they get motivated. However, my lessons have always aims, even though only in my head and pupils know where the lesson is leading

**INTERVIEWER: Now have a look at this model of levels of reflection, on what levels would you say that you reflect?**

INTERVIEWEE: I often reflected on how to increase motivation of pupils. Especially the older ones are unmotivated, so I try to convince them that they will need English not only for their professional but also personal lives. I also often think about what I want to teach them, whether I should continue with what I am teaching or change it. Whether I am not teaching something that is useless for them or whether I missed something. I probably did not reflect on any beliefs since I try not to have any belief about my pupils. I have students with special educational needs and I heard other teachers reprobate them. I try not to get influenced by that and evaluate them only on the basis of what I see in the classroom. There was one problematic boy who is very passive, smokes marijuana, and I managed to establish a good relationship with him unlike other teachers.

INTERVIEWER: **What methods do you use to reflect? You have mentioned that you are thinking about the lesson.**

INTERVIEWEE: I think about it. That's all. Actually my relative is a teacher, too. So we spontaneously talk about it at home. It is no systematic reflection; we rather complain and then have some deeper talk.

INTERVIEWER: **What about feedback from pupils?**

INTERVIEWEE: In the beginning, when I came to class, I asked them to write what they expected from English, why they want to learn it, what they would like. However, I did not draw any conclusions based on it because what they wrote was in harmony with my own beliefs.

INTERVIEWER: **How would you rate your teacher mentor?**

INTERVIEWEE: I have lot of freedom. I teach very independently. I was observed only during my first lesson. However, all teachers at the school are very nice and supportive and I am sure if I asked for advice I they would help me.

INTERVIEWER: **What was the analysis with the supervisor from university like?**

INTERVIEWEE: I prefer not to talk about it.

INTERVIEWER: **Would you tell me in general what is your idea about observations by supervisors from the department?**

INTERVIEWEE: I think that it is surely beneficial because you get some professional feedback. The question is the quality of the feedback. I think few people might not even get any at all.

**INTERVIEWER: Do you think you were well prepared for the teaching practice from the university? What would you eventually change?**

INTERVIEWEE: Even though I say that I do not like theory, on the other hand, I do not think that every can become teacher. Nobody should teach without proper education, I mean also in methodology. However, I would prefer if the methodological subjects were more practically oriented or if we had an additional practical subject where we could try different micro-teaching, or if we made more observations, or if the practice was longer. I find it unbelievable that after two months of teaching practice you are a ready-made teacher. I would certainly include more practice into the follow-up master studies even at the expense of all other academic subjects that are unrelated to teaching. There were enough of these subjects already in the bachelor's studies.

INTERVIEWER: Would you like to add something?

INTERVIEWEE: Another comment I would like to make - I think that lecturers who teach at university in the English department should know English well, which is very often not the case. I personally think that the department puts little emphasis on practical English as so many students speak bad English.